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Henry Sampson
from Sister Lizzie
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W. Morris.



Presently the horse of a traveler appeared. p. 6.

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HENRY MORRIS

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HENRY MORRIS;

OR,

LIVING FOR AN OBJECT.



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HENRY MORRIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORD IN SEASON.

One warm summer's afternoon, a boy about fourteen years of age was lounging upon the edge of a wooden trough in front of a public house. The trough was connected with a pump, and had been placed there for the convenience of horses. The large swinging sign, standing out upon the road in a conspicuous position, stated that the house was kept open for the "Entertainment of man and beast." Here the beast was refreshed with a cool, pure liquid, while within the owner was supplying himself with a burning poison. The boy possessed a naturally active turn of mind, and

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was lying down, as we described him just now, only because then there was nothing special for him to do. Presently the horse of a traveller appeared, turning a corner of the road. This sight aroused him in a moment from his listlessness, and, taking down a painted bucket from the side of the pump where it hung, he stood ready to hold the reins while the rider should dismount.

"Will you stop, sir?" he said, in a quick, business way, as the traveller drew up before the door.

"Just while you give my horse a drink," replied the gentleman.

"Hadn't you better go into the house, sir? Mr. Conner keeps the very best liquor, and I will take good care of your horse until you come back," urged the boy, in the same tone as before.

"No, I thank you," replied the gentleman. "My horse is thirsty, but I am not; and, in my opinion, the drink which Mr. Conner would give me in the bar-room is not half so good as what my horse is getting here."

The boy looked up steadily in the gentleman's face at this unusual speech, and for

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the first time noticed him particularly. A physiognomist would have been instantly attracted by the countenance which met the boy's upturned gaze. The whole cast of the face showed distinct marks of a high degree of intellectual strength mellowed by a mild and pleasing disposition. The boy was no professed physiognomist, yet he too was attracted by these things and felt their influence. He had a strong desire to know more of the stranger.

"This is a first-rate horse of your's, sir, and no mistake," he said, as he smoothed down the glossy coat of the horse.

"Yes, he is a very good horse," the gentleman answered; and, then looking very intently upon the intelligent and pleasant face of the boy, he inquired,—

"Is Mr. Conner your father?"

"Oh, no, sir," replied the boy; "my name is Henry Morris."

"And what is your business here?" asked the stranger.

"I hold horses for the customers and water them, as I am doing now, go of errands, do nearly all the chores about house, and sometimes 'tend bar," said the boy.

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"Do you mean to follow this kind of trade all your life?"

The boy hesitated, scarcely knowing how to reply. He had often indulged in a vague sort of fancy that some time or other he might be a respectable-looking middle-aged gentleman, owning a fine farm and driving his family to church in a two-horse wagon, or be the proprietor of a thriving store or factory. But *when* he was to commence moving towards this great change in his prospects, and *how* it was to be brought about, had never been seriously reflected upon; both were still far on in the dim uncertain future. The gentleman was waiting for an answer, however; so he replied, hesitatingly,—

"No, I suppose not, sir."

"Then I should think it was quite time that you were looking round for something better to do," said the gentleman.

Again the boy paused, while an expression of doubt settled upon his features. For the first time his fancies began to assume a sensible shape, and such an enormous pile of difficulties arose between him and their accomplishment that he felt half inclined

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to relinquish them forever. The stranger seemed to read the changing expression of his face and to understand it.

"You would not wish to become such a man as that?" he said, pointing to a miserable-looking being who was sleeping off the effects of a spree upon a bench near by.

The boy drew back with an involuntary shudder.

"There is no necessity for your making any exertion to be like him," continued the stranger. "All you have to do is to remain as you now are, and you may slide into it naturally enough."

The boy looked concerned and troubled, and, without speaking, he began slowly and mechanically to empty the bucket,—as by this time the horse was quite satisfied.

"Depend upon it, my boy," added the gentleman, taking the reins and mounting, yet still looking intently in his face, "no one ever yet became rich, or great, or good, without making an effort and overcoming many serious difficulties; and I should think it not impossible for you to do what others have done."

The next moment, after putting a piece

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of money in the boy's hand, he was riding slowly down the road. It was a quarter of a dollar; more than double the amount which he had ever before received for so trifling a service. The munificence of his unknown friend pleased him; yet the words which he had spoken left a far deeper impression upon his mind. He stood for some minutes looking after the horse and his rider, as they slowly disappeared, vainly hoping that something might induce them to change their course and return. Just as they were becoming lost to sight, a voice from a window was heard:—

"Henry! Henry! it is quite time you were taking that jug over to Mr. Sellars's."

With a quick movement the bucket was replaced in its former position and the jug taken in charge: but for the first time he felt an uneasiness at knowing that it contained whisky instead of some other liquid. The words of the stranger had taken effect

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CHAPTER II.

ONE STEP IN ADVANCE.

The early morning found Henry wide awake. He had upon his mind an indistinct idea that there was something new for him to be thinking about. The words of the stranger, in the same impressive tones in which they were uttered, sounded in his ears:—

'I should think it not impossible for you to do what others have done."

In a moment another scene was recalled to his memory,—the inside of a district-school; for he had attended school at short intervals for two or three years. The teacher had given his class an unusually difficult problem in arithmetic, which none but himself succeeded in answering correctly.

"Yes, the traveller was right. I can do any thing which another boy could do. I will try, at any rate!" he exclaimed, with

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energy; and, springing from the bed, began to dress.

During this process, however, his mind was still intent upon the same subject. There were many difficulties in the way of one's becoming rich and great and good, and he saw them at a glance distinctly before him. But the gentleman had said that no one ever became either of these without making an effort; and, as he intended to be all three, his desire could only be accomplished by an uncommonly strong effort.

The first thing for him to do was to get out of his present employment as soon as possible. Mr. and Mrs. Conner had both been very kind to him in their way; but no step could be taken towards promotion while he remained with them, and it was quite certain that he must leave. When this should be and where he would go were matters for reflection and must be arranged according to circumstances. He must be constantly looking round for a better occupation, and if he did not find it this week he might next or some other week; and, his naturally hopeful disposition assuring him of final success, his eye brightened with the an-

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ticipation, notwithstanding all the difficulties which lay before him. These thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, although not exactly in the order in which we have given them, and still continued even after he had gone down-stairs and engaged in his customary employments. He had a father to be consulted; yet, strange as it might seem at first sight, this fact presented no important obstacle to his imagination. No one, however, who knew Jim Morris, (as he was universally called,) would be at all surprised at it. His wife died when Henry was but a few months old, and since that time he had led a wandering and unsettled life, living in no place long at a time. His means of subsistence varied with his locality. Sometimes he would be working for a farmer or following a drove of cattle, and again for a few weeks acting as hostler at an inn. Added to his roving propensity, and perhaps the cause of it, was another and worse habit,—the love of strong drink. If he had ever possessed any natural energy of character, this habit had long since robbed him of it, leaving scarcely sufficient strength of mind to enable him to keep above

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actual beggary. He called Evandale—the neighbourhood where his son lived—his home, and he occasionally returned to it when he had earned a few dollars; but even then his only child was scarcely noticed at all, except in the bestowment of a few pennies when he was in an unusually good humour.

Thus poor Henry had been early thrown upon the tender mercies of the charitable, and forced to shift for himself at a period of life when other children are generally still guarded by earnest parental care and solicitude. Notwithstanding his father's entire carelessness with regard to his welfare, he had a strong conviction that it would not be proper to take any very important step without apprizing him of it; although, as I said before, he did not anticipate any difficulty in gaining his consent. He was then in the neighbourhood, and he determined to take the opportunity of seeing him on that very morning if possible. Accordingly, as soon as breakfast was over, he gained permission from Mrs. Conner to be absent for this purpose.

He sauntered slowly down the road to the place where his father lodged, still busily en-

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gaged with his new plans. The house stood considerably out of the village and a little way off from the main road. Mrs. Grey, the owner of it, took no other boarders; but she was a distant connection of his grandmother, and kept him only on account of an old friendship which had existed between the two families. She had outlived her husband and three children, and her oddity of manner caused her to lead a very retired life. He found the old woman, who was an early riser, already seated upon a bench in front of the house, busily occupied with her knitting.

"Well, Henry," she exclaimed, as he approached, "what brings you here at this time in the morning, when you ought to be at your work?"

"I wanted to see father," replied Henry.

"Well, then, I guess you can't do it," she said, quickly; "for he isn't here to be seen."

"Can you tell me where I can find him, aunty?" he inquired, as with a very disappointed look he was about turning away.

"What's the use of running off in such a hurry?" said the old woman, quickly, (for he had already reached the gate;) "your

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father has only gone down to Ben Jones's for a few minutes, and will be back before you could get the length of the wood-pile maybe; and it would take a great deal to make him hurry in that way after you."

"Are you sure he'll be back soon?" Henry asked, taking a seat by her side.

"Of course I am: did you ever know *him* to stay long in one place?" said she, tartly.

Henry took up a piece of chip from the ground and commenced whittling it with the only whole blade of an old knife, while the old woman continued her knitting. Presently she peered at him over the top of her glasses.

"I suspect you and Mr. Conner have had a quarrel," she said. "Boys are always fighting with somebody or other; and now you have come to see if your father will help you out of the scrape. But it isn't worth while, I can tell you, for Jim Morris hasn't wit enough to take care of himself, let alone looking after a great, tall boy like you."

"No, aunty," replied Henry, promptly, "you are quite mistaken; I have never yet quarrelled with Mr. Conner, and never in-

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tend to if I can help it. Besides," he added, a little proudly, "I expect to take care of myself now, without any one's help."

The old lady shrugged her shoulders and muttered "Humph!" at this display of independence, and again there was silence; for, though naturally talkative, Henry was never very much disposed to be communicative about his personal affairs. But Mrs. Grey was possessed of a pretty large stock of natural curiosity, and the silence did not last long.

"If you want spending-money, then," she resumed, "this isn't the right place to come to for it; for James Morris never did and never will have one cent in his pocket to spare for anybody."

"I don't expect any money from father," Henry answered, in the same independent manner. "I mean to try to make enough for myself."

"A pretty-sized fellow you are to talk of making money," said the old woman, glancing down upon him with a contemptuous expression, as if measuring his dimensions. "You had better wait until you grow a little larger before you begin to talk like a man."

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"Why, aunty," replied Henry, good-humouredly, "you called me a great, *tall* boy a while ago!"

"Well, child, you may be too big for some things and too little for others: but what *does* bring you here at this time in the morning?"

"I wanted to talk to my father about leaving Mr. Conner," he replied, after a slight hesitation.

"There it is! Just as I've always said; boys are never satisfied,—always wanting a change."

"But it isn't any harm for a boy to want to make a change for the better; is it?"

"'A rolling stone gathers no moss.'"

"A stone might lie forever in one place, too, without gathering any moss," returned Henry, quietly.

There was another pause in the conversation, which was again broken by the grandmother.

"Why don't you like Mr. Conner?" she inquired.

"I do like Mr. Conner," Henry answered.

"Then why don't you like Mrs. Conner?" she continued.

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"I like Mrs. Conner too: they have both been very kind to me," he replied.

"Then why do you want to leave them?"

"I don't like the business very well," said Henry, hesitatingly; "I would rather do something better when I grow up to be a man than keep tavern, and now I think it is time for me to commence looking out for it."

"Oh, I dare say you expect to sit idly, with your hands in your pocket, while gold and silver comes pouring in upon you of its own accord."

"No; I do not: I expect to have to work harder a great deal than I do now; but I don't care for that if I can only be——"

"What?"

"Rich and great," (he paused for a moment, and then added, what he had almost forgotten,) "and good too. I know I must work hard to be all these, and I am ready for it."

The knitting fell upon Mrs. Grey's lap, and in the fall several stitches were dropped; yet with unusual carelessness this was quite unheeded, while her gaze was intently fixed upon the boy's face. It was slightly turned

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from her, yet she could easily see the expression of deep and earnest purpose that glowed upon every feature. He evidently meant what he said, and she believed him. Her whole manner towards him was altered when she again addressed him, and but few of her acquaintances would have recognised her in the new character in which she now appeared.

"You are right, Henry," she said; "and it would have been better, a great sight better, for you, poor boy, if your father had had something of your notions when he was your age. But cheer up, Henry, and keep a good heart; if you are determined to try hard, and don't get put down by trifles, there is no doubt but that you will succeed. Others have done so, and why shouldn't you?"

"I am not afraid," he answered; "I am strong and healthy, and there is nothing to prevent my getting along in the world."

"And never be afraid or discouraged, Henry," she continued, with energy. "If you get a fall now and then, just make the best of it. Get up again and trudge along as brisk as before."

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Henry was about to reply, but the approach of his father prevented it.

A careful observer would have been struck with the great contrast between the father and son. Years of habitual intemperance and idleness had marred the countenance and figure of the former, while the latter was still rejoicing in the buoyancy and freshness of health and youth. Yet they were not naturally alike; for, at the age of his son, and while possessing vastly superior advantages, James Morris had been lazy and careless and with scarcely sufficient energy to lead him even to desire to be any better than he was. If the father could have been taken back to the days of his youth and presented before you side by side with his son, the difference would have been wide indeed. Time and habit had not produced the contrast, although they had strengthened and increased it.

"Well, Henry, boy, what brings you here this morning?" he inquired, in an indifferent tone.

"I came to see you, father, to talk with you on business," replied Henry, after a quick glance to ascertain whether his fa-

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ther was sufficiently sober to converse rationally.

"What's the matter now? I hope you haven't got into any scrape with Mr. Conner?" returned Morris, with some slight display of arrogance.

"No, father," Henry answered, "Mr. Conner and I agree very well; but I want to leave him and try something else."

"What do you want to do?" inquired the father.

"I don't know yet, exactly," replied Henry; "but I should like to do something *better;* one-half the time now I have nothing to do, and the other half is spent in doing things that are not useful to me, as I do not expect to keep tavern when I am a man."

The father looked a little surprised. He took off his old hat and placed it upon one end of the flat step where he had seated himself, and passed his fingers through his hair.

"You are not one bit like me, Henry," he said; "I would have just stayed on with Mr. Conner as long as he and I could have got along together. If he chose to give me

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enough to eat and drink for only half my time, that would have been *his* business and not mine; and I shouldn't have cared, —not I!"

"But I am wasting time that might be spent in learning what would be of use to me after a while," replied Henry.

"What do you want to do?" his father asked, in an indifferent manner, and as if but half understanding him after all.

"I am not quite certain yet; but I want to be looking out for something better," Henry answered.

"Well, I suppose I must let you do as you please," said his father; "and when you do make a change, if I am not here, you can let Grandmother Grey know all about it, and she will tell me where you are."

It was time for Henry to return to Mr. Conner's; and he had reached the gate on his way back, when Mrs. Grey called to him,—

"Here, Henry, is a quarter of a dollar; and some time this afternoon, when Mr. Conner can spare you, I wish you would bring me some yarn from the store. Mr.

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Strong knows the kind I use for knitting."

"Am I to spend the whole quarter for it?" Henry inquired.

"Yes; and tell him to give a little heavier weight than he did last time, or I'll have a quarrel with him when I see him; and to remember to give me the smoothest skeins he has, for I don't like knots."

Mrs. Grey's face wore the same shrewd expression now that it did during the first part of Henry's interview with her.

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CHAPTER III.

A FRIEND.

It was nearly dark when Henry had fulfilled Mrs. Grey's commission; and he found her again alone, his father having gone to spend the evening with some of his companions.

"Here is your yarn; and I hope it will suit, for Mr. Strong let me pick out the very nicest from the lot," he said, while reaching her the package done up in brown paper.

She shook out the yarn and examined it as carefully as she could by the dim twilight.

"It looks pretty smooth; but did you watch the weight? Storekeepers will give light weight sometimes, and you have to keep a sharp look-out that they don't cheat you."

"I don't believe Mr. Strong would cheat you," replied Henry. "I think I could trust to his honesty."

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"I dare say he is as good as any of them; but, for my part, I like to watch them all up, and then I am sure not to get cheated."

"Father is not at home, I suppose?" said Henry, after a moment's pause.

"No, nor ever is many minutes at a time," replied she. "But, Henry, if you expect your father to help you get on in the world you will be disappointed. It's more than he could ever do for himself."

This was plain speaking; but Mrs. Grey had only given expression to a fact with which Henry was perfectly familiar, and he did not mind it.

"I don't expect much help from my father," he said. And then, as his entire want of friends upon whom he could rely flashed upon his recollection, he added, "nor from any one else."

These last words were spoken in a tone that touched a tender chord in Mrs. Grey's bosom; for there were tender chords there, although those who knew her but slightly would scarcely have believed it.

"Isn't there some good, clever man that you could talk to, who would be willing to

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stand by you and be your friend?" she inquired.

"Yes, I know of *one*," replied Henry,—instantly thinking of the traveller.

"Then why don't you see him?" she asked, hastily.

"I don't even know his name, or where he could be found," he answered. "It was a gentleman who stopped a little while at Mr. Conner's door yesterday and talked to me in a very friendly way. I think he would be my friend if I could only find him."

"God will be your friend if you are a good boy and say your prayers regularly, Henry," said Mrs. Grey, in a serious tone.

Mrs. Grey was not a religious woman, but she was sufficiently acquainted with the nature of religion to know that God has promised to be a friend to the good; and Henry's utter friendlessness affected her so deeply that she felt a desire that he should avail himself of the merciful offer. The boy was surprised to hear such language from her, and returned no answer.

"I hope you do say your prayers regularly, Henry," she continued.

"I don't say them every night and morn-

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ing," Henry replied; "for I am often in a hurry, and sometimes I forget; but I do every now and then."

"You ought to do it always, Henry," she said, in the same serious tone; "for you know you have nobody to look to for help but God."

Both were silently engaged in reflection for some minutes. Henry was looking over the vast uncertain future that was before him. In the remote distance he could readily discern the bright light which he hoped at some time to reach; but the broad dark space that intervened,—how should he travel over that safely, unguided and alone? His faith was not strong enough to realize the truth of God's promised protection, and there was no human arm upon which he could rely.

His companion had another subject for contemplation. Her thoughts were wandering far back to the past,—the days of her childhood and youth. She was once more seated, in fancy, beside the huge fireplace of a comfortable farm-house. Not far off sat a boy near her own age, with a serious cast of countenance, studiously conning the

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pages of a Bible. The blazing logs shed a brilliant light over the boy and his book. No household-hearth since then had ever appeared so comfortable to Mrs. Grey, nor any flame ever thrown out such beautiful radiancy as that one. The boy was her only brother, and, though young in years, a firm and consistent follower of the Redeemer. Her mind passed rapidly over the lapse of years until it reached the time when that boyish figure had expanded to manhood's height and she herself had reached maturity. Again they were side by side; but now his face wore a pained expression, as he endeavoured to convince her by reasoning of an error which she was about to commit; while she, stubbornly refusing to be convinced, angrily defied him. A gloomy cloud rested upon the subsequent years, which she did not care to allow even her own memory to penetrate. Since then she and her brother had been almost as strangers to each other. For a very long time she had deeply resented his interference with her projects; and although, before many years had passed, circumstances must have compelled her to admit that it would

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have been better for her to have followed his advice, yet she had never been willing to acknowledge it openly. She knew that he was still living at the old homestead, and that through all those years he had never once swerved from the religious principles which he had adopted in his youth. She felt sure that he would be a safe guide for Henry if she could only manage to get him under his protection.

"Would you be willing to work for a farmer, Henry?" she asked.

"I would be willing to do any thing," he quickly replied, then adding, almost immediately,—"at least, any thing that would be respectable."

Again there was silence. Mrs. Grey was wondering how she could contrive to place Henry under the care of her brother. He lived nearly forty miles off, and it would cost about three dollars, including all expenses, to get him there. Mrs. Grey was very careful in spending money, and she expected to be obliged to advance a larger sum than this to Henry; yet her main difficulty did not lie here. To introduce him at all to her brother's notice through

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her means, was an overture of peace, and it required a strong effort to bring down her pride of heart sufficiently to do this; but she was not prepared to take him thither herself and be thus brought face to face with her brother. Her musings were interrupted by Henry before she could decide which was the best course for her to pursue.

"Do you know of any farmer who wants a boy?" he inquired.

"No, not exactly," she replied; "but I know a very good farmer whom I was just now wishing would take you, and I was wondering how I could manage to get you to him."

"Who is he, aunt? and where does he live?" he asked, eagerly.

"It is my brother. He lives at our old home down in the valley, thirty or forty miles from here."

It seemed strange to Henry to think of Mrs. Grey's being any one's sister. She had lived so much alone, and appeared so entirely without family ties, that he could scarcely imagine that such a near relationship between her and any other human

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being had ever existed. Some days before Mrs. Grey's brother would not have been considered by him as a very desirable person to live with; but her recent kindness led him now to regard the proposition in a very different light.

"My brother is a very good man," she continued,—"not one bit like me, for he is very religious, and would teach you a great many things besides farming that would be very useful to you. Do you think you would like to live with him, Henry?"

"Oh, yes! very much," Henry replied, quickly, and from his heart.

"I guess he would take you for my sake," she answered; "although I haven't seen him for many a long year, and we did not part very good friends."

"What is his name? and where does he live?" Henry inquired.

"His name is George Thorne, and he lives at Greensburg. When do you calculate to go away from Mr. Conner, Henry?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet," returned Henry. "I should like to go pretty soon; but it would not do to leave Mr. Conner until he has some one in my place."

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"That's right, Henry; never do a mean trick to any one as long as you live, and then you have nothing to be ashamed of," replied Mrs. Grey, with energy. "Give Mr. Conner fair notice, and let him look out for another boy. He need not look far, I'm sure, for they're not scarce in these parts, any more than the blackberries are scarce on the bushes. It was only yesterday, when I had turned my back for a little while, that a half-dozen or more of them got into my garden and nearly stripped my best cherry-tree. And one evening last week I wondered that my cow didn't come home; so I called and called until I was hoarse, but could see nothing of her. At last I heard her bellowing away off in the wood, and I went to see what was the matter with her. After a pretty hard search I found her tied fast to a tree with a thick rope, and the poor thing had been trying to get loose until she was quite worn out. The rogues! I wish I could only catch them some time, I'd pay them well, I know!"

"It was too bad," said Henry, at the very first opportunity, anxious to put a stop to the new topic which Mrs. Grey had intro-

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duced, as soon as possible; for he knew she would not soon close it of her own accord.

"But I am afraid I shall have to wait a long time," he continued, quickly, "before I shall get money enough to take me that far."

"How much have you?" Mrs. Grey inquired.

"Two dollars exactly," he replied; "and I know that is not enough."

"Well, do you just tell Mr. Conner what you mean to do, and then drop in and see me about it," said Mrs. Grey.

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CHAPTER IV.

A NEW DIFFICULTY.

"WHY, Henry, you don't mean to run off and leave me in such a hurry? I'm sure I have always tried to do well by you!"

Henry had just informed Mr. Conner of his intention of changing his employment; and this was the answer.

"I don't intend to leave you until you have an opportunity of getting another boy in my place," replied Henry.

There was considerable surprise and annoyance expressed in Mr. Conner's manner when he gave his first answer; but now he spoke in his usual tone:—

"Well, don't be in a hurry, Henry. I'll see about the other boy after a while."

"I would like you to see about him as soon as you can, if you please, Mr. Conner; for I want to leave the first good opportunity," replied Henry. But before he had

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finished speaking, Mr. Conner was out of hearing.

Two weeks had passed away, and every thing seemed to be going on as usual. Mr. Conner made no allusion to Henry's leaving, nor (so far as Henry could ascertain) had he made any inquiries for one to fill his place. This silence was extremely awkward; and, if the boy had not fully made up his mind as to his future course, he would have been tempted to continue on and say nothing more about it. But this would not do; and he determined once more to open the subject to his employer.

"Have you heard of any boy yet who will take my place, Mr. Conner?" he said, one day, when he found him alone and in a humour to be consulted.

"I didn't think it worth while to be in a hurry, Henry," he replied, in an indifferent tone; "but I'll look around some time soon."

Henry did not like the manner in which this answer was given. He began to fear that he must encounter a formidable obstacle where he had not expected it.

"I am sorry to leave you, for some rea-

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sons, Mr. Conner," he said; "but I must go; and I would be very glad if you would get some one in my place very soon, for I can be ready to go now at any time."

He felt justified in saying this, for his aunt Grey had been urging haste and promising to get him to her brother's house whenever he could be spared from Mr. Conner's.

"I'll see about it," Mr. Conner replied, in the same careless tone as before.

Another week passed without hearing any thing of his successor from Mr. Conner, and Henry began to grow quite disheartened, and consulted his aunt as to what he should do. Mrs. Grey scolded a while at Mr. Conner's perverse indifference; but she had too keen a love of justice to advise him to do any thing that was not perfectly fair and open.

"Just tell him to-night, Henry," she said, "that you must go away in one week from this time, and that you hope he may find some one to take your place before then, but that if he does not it can make no difference in your arrangements. He has had plenty of time already; and I am sure

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there is no scarcity of boys,—good enough to water horses and carry jugs of whisky for him. I'll see about getting your things ready for you," she continued, finding Henry hesitate. "You do just as I tell you, and I will attend to all the rest."

Henry did as she told him, and in so decided a manner that Mr. Conner felt that, however annoying it might be for him to dispense with his services, or however difficult to find another equally good to take his place, he must submit. Notwithstanding Mrs. Grey's assurances, Mr. Conner differed from her in believing that Henry's place could be readily filled; and he would willingly, if possible, not only have postponed the time of his departure, but prevented it altogether.

The end of the week came, and Henry commenced preparations for leaving. His amount of worldly goods was very small, and it did not require much time to pack up in a cotton handkerchief what remained after having reserved the best he had to wear in travelling. When this was done, he called to pay a farewell visit to Mrs. Grey and his father. The latter was

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just about leaving the cottage when Henry entered.

"I have come to bid you good-by, father," he said; and his voice faltered, as he began to feel that "good-by" was a harder word to say than he had anticipated.

"Why, you are not going already, boy, are you?" said his father, with some little surprise.

"Yes, I am going away early to-morrow morning, and I was afraid I should not have time to see you before the stage leaves," he replied.

"What stage? Where are you going?" Morris asked.

He had been told before; but, in the half-stupefied condition in which he happened to be at the time, he had scarcely heard it.

"The stage that goes to Greensburg. I am going to Mrs. Grey's brother," Henry answered.

"Oh, ho!" replied the father, with some surprise. "Well, I guess he's a clever man, but a little too strict in some of his notions. But good-by, Henry. Take care

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of yourself and be a good boy. I dare say we'll meet some time not far off."

He held out his hand almost mechanically, and Henry took it, while a momentary feeling of disappointment chilled him to the heart. Unconsciously he had hoped that when it came to the parting his only remaining parent would have exhibited some slight token of fatherly affection. Henry was not a child of God, or he might have been comforted by a heavenly Father's promise:—"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

He was looking dejectedly down the road, as his father went away from him, when Mrs. Grey's voice turned his attention.

"Well, Henry, you have at last managed to get clear of Mr. Conner,' she said. "I am glad of it; and now I want you to come in here, till I show you what I have got ready for you."

Henry went into the inner room, and there, spread out upon the table, he saw various articles of clothing designed for himself. A glance sufficed to show him

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this, and that they were of much better material than any he had been accustomed to wearing.

"Oh, Aunt Grey! you are very kind!" he exclaimed; but the old woman stopped him.

"I am not rich, Henry," she said; "but I've got enough to keep me above want as long as I live, and I have no one to save up for, and I wanted you to look nice when you go over to your grandmother's old neighbourhood, that you mightn't disgrace her memory."

"Did my grandmother live near your brother?" Henry inquired; for he was quite ignorant of his family history.

"Yes; and your grandfather lived in a pretty house in the town,—as nice a house as it could boast then. He was a doctor and a very fine man, making a good living by his practice; but he died before he could lay by much, and your grandmother was too easy and good-natured to have the care of a bad, lazy boy like your father; so she let him do pretty much as he pleased, and you see what has come of it. Poor woman! she died before he was

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quite grown up, and while she was still so blind to his faults as to believe it almost impossible that he could ever turn out to be any thing but good!"

Henry's eye brightened and his cheek glowed at the idea of his grandfather having lived in a nice house and filling an honourable and respectable position in the community, and his own purpose of attaining a similar eminence at some future time grew stronger than ever. He asked many questions about his grandparents, and Mrs. Grey's answers satisfied him that they were not only far superior to his father in social position, but much better than those with whom he had been accustomed to mingle. One more anxious inquiry he made,—about his *mother*. Could Mrs. Grey tell him something about her? But Mrs. Grey was unable to gratify him as he wished. All she knew of her was that she was a delicate, mild-looking creature, quite unfit to bear the hardships of the life she had chosen.

This last evening that Henry was to spend with his old friend passed more rapidly to him than any preceding one; and he was surprised when the striking of the old-

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fashioned clock in the corner warned him that it was time for him to go. Mrs. Grey packed up the new clothes which she had prepared for him in a small valise, intended as an additional present; and, when this was done and Henry had thanked her warmly for it, he stood up to take leave.

"What shall I say to Mr. Thorne for you, Aunt Grey?" he inquired.

Mrs. Grey busied herself in securing the clasp of the valise, and the expression of her face seemed to indicate that her thoughts were principally fixed upon that one object; but a slight quivering of the lips showed that some deeper feeling was at work in her heart, as she replied,—

"Tell him that I have not quite forgotten that we were children together and once sat at the same table, though many years have gone by since then."

Henry held out his hand.

"Good-by, Aunt Grey," he said; "you have been a kind friend to me, and I shall never forget it."

"Be a good boy always, Henry," she answered, pressing his hand; "I shall miss

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you very much, — more than you think, perhaps."

The last words were spoken so tremulously that Henry looked up involuntarily and saw that there were tears in her eyes, which she was vainly endeavouring to conceal. He did not trust himself to say any thing further, but, after another silent pressure of the hand, turned to go. He had proceeded some distance along the road, when he laid down his valise and stopped to look back. The cottage door was still open, and by the light from the inside he could perceive Mrs. Grey still standing where he had left her, as if intently looking after him.

"I shall never in all my life do any thing that will make her think less of me than she now does," he repeated to himself, with energy; and then, taking up the valise, he continued his walk.

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CHAPTER V.

LEAVING THE OLD HOME TO LOOK FOR A NEW ONE.

"COME, Henry! are you ready? The stage doesn't wait for lazy passengers, you know."

Henry was taking a rather protracted leave of the different members of Mr. Conner's family, who were all assembled upon the front porch for the purpose of seeing him off. Now that it had come to the point, it seemed harder to go than he had imagined it would be. For the moment he was half inclined to give up his new plans:—it appeared so much easier for him to stay where he then was and let things take their course. What if, after all, he should conclude to do so? The words of the kind traveller instantly occurred to him in the same quiet yet impressive tones with which they had been uttered:—

"All you have to do is to remain as you now are, and you may slide into it naturally

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enough." Yes; it would be much easier for him to stay there, idling his time away, until he should become a confirmed vagabond: but could he do this?

"Maybe you won't go, after all, Henry," said Mrs. Conner, seeing his irresolution, and half hoping to prevail upon him to stay, even at that late hour.

A moment before it would have seemed to require but a few more such words to induce him to remain. Now he whispered inwardly, with fresh determination, "I cannot stay here at so great a risk;" but his answer to Mrs. Conner was arrested by the resolute call from Benny, the stage-driver, and, with a hasty "Good-by to all," he jumped into the stage. A few minutes afterwards he was rolling rapidly away from old scenes and old associations,—perhaps forever. This thought haunted him unpleasantly for a while, particularly as they passed the unfrequented lane that led to Mrs. Grey's house, and he strained his eyes to catch a faint glimpse of the chimney visible between the trees. A slender wreath of smoke was curling from its top and slowly floating away.

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With a hasty "good-bye" to all he jumped into the stage. p. 46.

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"Aunt Grey is getting her breakfast, and, I dare say, she is thinking of me," he said to himself, with inward satisfaction, pleased at the thought of being an object of interest to any one. Something just then caused Benny to stop. He had been too deeply interested in his musings to observe what it was; and now, before he had time for reflection, his own name was called.

"Oh, Aunt Grey, I am very glad to see you once more!" he exclaimed, with surprise and pleasure.

Mrs. Grey leaned over the side of the stage, and, placing a small package in Henry's hand, whispered,—

"Here, Henry, I quite forgot to give you this last night. Use it carefully, and don't let people cheat you. You need not buy your dinner, for here" (putting another and larger package upon his lap) "is something for your dinner, and they always overcharge at taverns."

Henry had hardly time to murmur his thanks when she was gone and the stage was again on its way. The smaller package contained money: he knew by feeling it; and he slipped it quietly into his vest-

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pocket. He was seated upon the front seat, beside Benny, and, with a sensitiveness natural to him, he disliked the idea of having any third person aware of its contents. The larger package could not be so easily concealed, nor was he so anxious about it.

"The old woman has got to be very careful of you lately, Henry," said Benny, looking down upon the package in his lap.

"Yes," replied Henry; "she has been very kind to me."

"But she is a crabbed, hard sort of an old body, at the best," returned Benny.

'I don't think so," said Henry, warmly; "she is very good-hearted indeed."

"Very stingy, and hard as a flint," Benny persisted.

"Indeed, you're mistaken," replied Henry, with increased warmth. "If you knew her as well as I do, you would know she's very generous and kind."

"Any thing but old Mother Grey getting a character for generosity!" exclaimed Benny, with an unbelieving laugh.

Henry's face was of a deeper crimson. He was indignant at the charges against his friend; but, feeling that it would be useless

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to attempt arguing the point with Benny, yet determined at least to let him know that his own opinion remained unchanged, he replied,—

"You may think what you please, Benny; I can't help it. But Mrs. Grey has been as kind to me as if I was her own child."

"Oh, well, Henry," said Benny, "we won't quarrel about the old woman; if she's been good to you I'm glad to hear of it, and it's quite right for you to stand up for her: I like you all the better for it."

As if to convince Henry that he had no ill-feeling towards him on account of their differing in opinion of Mrs. Grey, Benny took extra pains to entertain him by pointing out various places of interest on the road and relating many little incidents which had happened to him in the course of his life as a stage-driver. They had gone a few miles in this way, when he reined up the horses in front of a public-house.

"You are not going to stop so soon, are you, Benny?" inquired Henry.

"Yes; I always stop here a few minutes to water the horses, you see, Henry," replied Benny.

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"I don't believe the horses want water already," said Henry.

"Well, if they don't want water we must let them breathe, you know," returned Benny. "And you had better get out, too, Henry," he added, "and stretch your legs: riding in a stage is tiresome to them that's not used to it."

Henry did not feel tired; but he concluded to follow Benny's advice, for the purpose of looking around him for a little while. Benny proceeded directly to the bar, while Henry stood upon the porch before the door, looking over a handbill containing some brilliantly-coloured pictures illustrating the wonderful agility of a famous rope-dancer who was expected to perform in the neighbourhood in a few days. He had not finished it, when Benny interrupted him:—

"Come, Henry, take a drink. What would you like?"

Henry turned, and had advanced half-way across the bar-room, when his eye fell upon a figure very similar to the one to which the kind traveller had directed his attention at Mr. Conner's,—a miserable, wretched toper, such as may be found in almost any neigh-

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bourhood. Henry started back. He might have hesitated about accepting Benny's offer even without this warning vision, and now he was fully determined about it.

"I have not got quite out of danger yet," he whispered to himself.

"Come, Henry, what will you have?" inquired Benny.

"A glass of water," replied Henry.

"With a little gin and sugar to give it a relish?" said Benny.

"No; a good glass of cold water don't need any thing to give it a relish," Henry answered, following the example of his old friend the traveller, although not using the very same words.

"That's all nonsense, Henry," said Benny, with a look of annoyance. "Come; take something."

Henry wavered for an instant, not wishing to offend Benny. But a moment's reflection made him as determined as ever. He would much rather be like the gentlemanly traveller than the poor creature before him, whose figure was so disgusting even to the sight.

"I will take nothing but water," he re-

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plied, resolutely; "for I am determined never to be a drunkard if I can help it."

"The boy is more than half right," said a voice from behind him.

Henry turned, and saw a woman—the wife of the innkeeper—standing at a door which opened into the sitting-room, and who had been an unobserved listener to the conversation.

"I'll give him a glass of fresh water, if no one else will," she continued, filling a tumbler and handing it to him.

Henry thanked her, drank it, and then returned quietly to his seat on the stage-box.

"A queer sort of a boy that must be!" said the bar-tender.

"Yes; there's no such thing as making him do what he don't mean to do," replied Benny. "But, however," he immediately added, not wishing to do him injustice, "he's a very clever boy, with no mother, and a drunken fellow for a father."

"God help him!" ejaculated the woman from her heart; for she was a mother, and knew how to sympathize with the motherless.

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Benny exhibited no particular signs of anger towards Henry when he returned to his old station; yet he was silent and reserved in his manner, presenting quite a contrast to his usual chatty communicativeness. He did not ask him to alight at the next stopping-place, nor to drink with him; yet this was a relief to Henry, who disliked very much to be obliged to refuse what was intended as a kindness. When they stopped to change horses and take dinner, Henry looked out a quiet spot where he might eat his luncheon unobserved. Then, for the first time, he found a convenient opportunity of examining the smaller package which Mrs. Grey had given him. The contents amounted in all to five dollars. He had been able of himself to add sufficient to his stock to pay the stage-fare through to Greensburg and have a trifle over; so he should not be obliged to break in upon Mrs. Grey's present. It might have been a temptation to most boys to spend this money in selfish gratification; but Henry had been thrown upon his own resources so early in life as to accustom him to habits of self-denial and teach him the necessity of

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strict economy at an age when most boys know but little of the importance of money.

"I must take good care of this, for it man be a long time before I get any more money," he said, as he folded it up carefully and replaced it in his pocket.

The horn was blown to let the passengers know that the stage was ready, and Henry hurried back to the inn to see after his valise and secure his seat and bid good-by to Benny. The valise was in the new driver's hand, and Benny was giving him directions about putting it in the old place in front of the stage, when Henry appeared.

"This is Henry Morris, the owner of the valise," said Benny. "You must take good care of him, Nathan, for he is a pretty good boy, although he came rather hard down upon me a while ago, and I was half inclined to get angry at him."

Henry's countenance brightened up at this speech of Benny's, and he held out his hand affectionately.

"Good-by, Benny," he said, while tears moistened his eyes at the thought of parting with this last familiar face.

"Good-by, Henry," replied Benny, almost

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equally moved. "I hope you may find good friends where you are going; and I dare say you may grow up to be a considerable gentleman after a while and quite forget poor old Benny Thomas."

"No, no, Benny!" returned Henry, "I could never forget you as long as I live; for I have always liked you, Benny!"

"Ah, well! time brings strange changes!" said Benny, as he helped Henry up to his seat.

The stage rattled on, bearing Henry away from the last person that reminded him of Evandale; and now, although but half of his journey was accomplished, he was already surrounded entirely by new scenes and new associations. For the first time, feelings of doubt and dread crept upon him. Perhaps it might have been better for him to have remained with Mr. Conner. He may have been too easily led to follow Mrs. Grey's advice. People thought Mr. Thorne strict, and he might find him a severe and hard master. At any rate, he had no claim upon him, and he might refuse to employ him: what should he do then? Mrs. Grey had assured him that the fact of her sending him

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would be sufficient to induce her brother to see after his welfare; but she had not seen him for years, and, according to her own account, they had been at variance when they parted. It seemed wonderful to him now that he had ever consented to leave Evandale under such circumstances. It was too late for him to turn back, however, even if upon further consideration he should conclude it was best to do so; he must look forward to meeting Mr. Thorne and facing the danger, whatever it might be. And what would he do if his fears should prove well founded? "I will take care of myself, or, at least, try to do so," he said, with energy, as his natural feeling of independence regained its influence. He would hand Mr. Thorne the small slip of paper upon which Mrs. Grey had written a very few words to tell where he came from and prevent the possibility of his story being doubted; and, if he did not choose to employ him, there were others who might be glad to do so, and he would try somewhere else.

"Are you going all the way to Greensburg?" inquired the driver.

"Yes," said Henry; "I understood Mrs.

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Grey that her brother lived at the other end of the town. Do you know Mr. Thorne?"

"Oh, yes," replied the driver; "there are not many folks in these parts that don't know him."

"What sort of a man is he?" asked Henry.

"I like him right well," the man answered. "Some folks think him a *leetle* too strait-laced in his notions; but I never saw that it hurt him any."

Henry fell into another train of thought, suggested by that one word "*strait-laced.*" He wondered whether he should think Mr. Thorne strait-laced.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE JOURNEY'S END.

THE sun was just setting when the stage reached Greensburg, and its rays still gilded the tall trees and house-tops. The town looked very pleasant in this light; but Henry scarcely observed it as the stage rattled along the main street. He was too deeply engaged in thinking how Mr. Thorne would probably receive him. It was strange, but even the recollection of what Mrs. Grey had told him of his grandfather's former residence there had been quite forgotten, until something suddenly reminded him of it.

"Have you lived here long?" he inquired of the driver.

"Yes; I was born in this town," he replied.

Henry looked at the man for the purpose of judging whether he was old enough to

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be able to give him the information which he wanted. One glance proved satisfactory: the shrivelled, time-worn face of the man looked old enough in the boy's eyes to have seen two or three generations.

"My grandfather lived here a very long time ago," he said. "His name was Henry Morris; (I was named for him.) Could you show me the house where he lived? Mrs. Grey told me he was a doctor."

"Well, now!" exclaimed the driver, in some surprise, regarding Henry intently while he spoke; "I should never have thought of your being Dr. Morris's grandson! Yes, I can show you where he lived in a few minutes. The house is just a *leetle* ahead; you might see it now if it wasn't for the trees."

A moment's pause, and he added, quickly,—

"Here it is, on the right side of the road,—yonder."

The quick glance which Henry was able to take of it disclosed to him a beautifully-cultivated space of ground, ornamented with fine trees, through the branches of which he could discern a large, substantial

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stone house. To his inexperienced eye the place looked almost magnificent.

"Oh, what beautiful trees!" he exclaimed, admiringly.

"Yes, there are some very nice trees in that place," replied the driver; "and Dr. Morris planted every one of them."

"I wonder if I'll ever grow rich enough to buy it," Henry repeated to himself. Then almost immediately he added, "I'll try: other poor boys have grown rich; why should not I?"

This new thought turned his attention for a time from contemplating the awkwardness of his interview with Mr. Thorne, which he would so soon be called upon to realize.

"Here is my stopping-place," said the driver, drawing up the horses before an inn much larger and more stylish than Mr. Conner's.

"How far is this from Mr. Thorne's? and which way shall I take?" inquired Henry.

"Not very far," replied the driver. "Keep on this road until you come to the first farm-house on the left. You will know it by the large barn and wagon-house."

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Henry took up his valise, bade good-by to the driver, and went on his way, his mind dwelling upon the old feeling of discomfort.

"I wish it was all over!" he exclaimed, "even if Mr. Thorne should conclude not to take me."

This short soliloquy was scarcely ended when a large barn and other out-buildings met his eye; and he felt that his fate would soon be decided. It was a large, pleasant-looking, white house,—larger than Henry had expected to see. The broad walk was neatly gravelled and bordered with pretty flowers, and the smooth lawn decorated with a pleasing variety of fine shade-trees. He paused nervously at the gate until he should get out the brief note of introduction which Mrs. Grey had given to him. A moment's thought re-assured him. He had nothing to fear; let what would happen, he felt able to take care of himself; and with a firm hand he opened the gate and entered the enclosure. Then, for the first time, he observed that there were persons upon the steps of both sexes and different ages. He walked hastily up and presented his paper to an elderly man, whom he presumed to be

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Mr. Thorne. He took it, read its contents, passed his hand rapidly across his eyes, and then leaned his head upon it. He seemed slightly agitated for a few moments; and then, handing the paper to his wife, who sat near by, he inquired, in a clear, distinct tone,—

"When did you last see Mrs. Grey?"

"This morning, after I had left Evandale," Henry replied.

"Why did you leave Evandale?" he again inquired. "Mrs. Grey only says that you wanted to change your place."

"I lived with Mr. Conner, who keeps the tavern, and I wanted to get into some better employment," Henry answered.

His embarrassment was vanishing, and he was fast recovering his natural manner.

"Why didn't you like tavern-keeping?" Mr. Thorne asked.

"I don't think selling liquor a very respectable business," Henry answered. "Besides, I was a little afraid that I might get to drinking it myself."

"You are James Morris's son, I understand. Where is he now?"

"He is at Evandale. My mother has

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been dead for a long time,—longer than I can recollect; and my father——"

Here Henry paused. He felt an intuitive dislike to telling his father's failings where they might not be known; but Mr. Thorne was waiting for him to finish; so he continued:—

"My father could not help me any, and so I had to go away and try for myself; and Aunt Grey—I always called her aunt—said that she knew that if you wanted a boy you would take me when *she* sent me."

Mr. Thorne seemed to be in deep thought, but soon said, hesitatingly,—

"I am not particularly in need of a boy just now. I hire none but men."

"But maybe I might be able to do as much as *some* men," replied Henry. "I know a great deal about horses, and Mr. Conner was very sorry to have me go away."

"How old are you?" Mr. Thorne asked.

"Past fourteen; in my fifteenth year," Henry replied. "But, if you don't think you have enough work, and don't want me, perhaps you might know of some one in the neighbourhood who *would* like to have me," he added.

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"Suppose we wait a while until I have time to think the matter over?" Mr. Thorne answered. "And in the mean while, mother," he continued, turning to his wife, "I dare say Henry must be hungry by this time. Couldn't you give him some supper and a bed to-night?"

Henry turned for the first time and looked up in Mrs. Thorne's face. It was not a young face by any means; but it wore so sweet an expression, and the mild blue eyes looked so kindly upon him, that it was beautiful in his view. He thought his own mother must have had just such a countenance. She left them for a few minutes, and then returned and asked Henry to follow her. He did so, and was taken into a room where a table was spread with the whitest cloth he had ever seen, and upon it some nice biscuits, cold ham and some stewed fruit. He was hungry and ate heartily, and it seemed to him to be the best meal he had ever eaten. Mrs. Thorne sat beside him, asking him questions and talking kindly to him all the time. She was not less kind than Mrs. Grey had been, and much more gentle and refined in her manner.

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"Come with me, and I will show you your room," she said, when Henry had finished his supper and was about leaving the table.

He followed her up-stairs to a small but cheerful-looking room over the kitchen, neatly and plainly furnished with every necessary convenience, and vastly superior to the chamber he had at Mr. Conner's. There was a small book-shelf in one corner of the room, containing a Bible and several good books. Henry barely waited to read their titles, and then washed his face and hands and brushed some of the dust from his clothes. When this was done he returned to Mr. Thorne, remembering that he had not yet delivered Mrs. Grey's last message to him. He was still where he had left him; while his youngest child, a little girl several years younger than Henry, was seated at his feet upon a lower step of the piazza.

"Mrs. Grey told me to tell you, sir, that, although so many years had passed since she had seen you, she had not quite forgotten yet that you were children of the same father and mother," Henry said, repeating Mrs. Grey's words as nearly as he could recollect them.

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Mr. Thorne stroked his little daughter's hair, and returned no answer; but Henry saw that his face looked grave and serious. Mrs. Thorne turned to a pleasant-looking boy, rather older than Henry, and said —

"George, Henry spoke of having had the charge of horses. Suppose you take him to see your new colt? But do not go too far away, as it is nearly time for worship."

George laid aside the book which he had been reading, and Henry went with him to the stable. The colt was a very beautiful animal, and Henry was very much pleased with it; yet there was something that won his admiration even more than this. It was the quiet, gentlemanly behaviour of George Thorne,—so like that of the kind traveller whose words had induced him to leave Mr. Conner. He wondered at this resemblance, not knowing that it was because they both learned of the same Teacher and that both were striving to follow the example of Him who was meek and lowly in heart.

While George was showing Henry the various objects of interest about the barn and stable, his parents were holding a con-

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sultation with reference to the best plan to be pursued with regard to the boy.

"Do you mean to keep Henry Morris?"

"I don't know what to say about it," Mr. Thorne replied, slowly and deliberately, as if trying to make up his mind while he answered her question. "I should like to do him a kindness for his grandfather's sake as well as his own; but I have a sufficient number of hands employed at present to do all my work; and, even if I were willing to do it, it would be a doubtful kindness to the boy to keep him here in idleness."

"I thought you told me that Roberts was going to leave you when his week is up," said Mrs. Thorne.

"Yes, Roberts did say that he intended to go to a trade. But Roberts is eighteen and can do a man's work, while Henry is a mere boy."

"Poor boy! He seems anxious to work and quite confident of being able to do it. Couldn't you try him for a few days? Perhaps, by making a different arrangement of the work, you might get along with his assistance and do without a new man."

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Mr. Thorne shook his head.

"There is an objection to your plan which you seem to have lost sight of entirely," he said. "Roberts did not board with us; but if I were to take a boy like that, who has no parent to see after him, I should think it my duty to take him into my own family and attend to his welfare as I would wish another to do to my own boy if he were placed in similar circumstances."

"Certainly," Mrs. Thorne returned, quietly. "But what then?"

"It would increase your cares considerably."

Mrs. Thorne was silent for a few moments, as if considering something in her own mind.

"You would probably find the trouble much greater than the profit in taking charge of this boy; and you do well to hesitate about it," continued her husband.

"I was not hesitating," she replied, "but thinking over the kindness of God to us lately. How he has seemed to bless you in every thing and prosper all your undertakings; so that now we have not only an

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abundance for ourselves, but enough to spare for another. And that reminded me of the strange clergyman's text a few weeks ago:—'If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner: that he may live with thee.' 'Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: *because for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto.*' I was wondering whether it had not been that God had prospered us purposely that we might have it in our power to help this poor boy. 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry;' and even a sparrow may not fall to the ground without his notice. Then certainly he has been caring for this poor, deserted, motherless child, and has sent him to us for our aid and sympathy."

"You are right," replied Mr. Thorne. "This is an opportunity of doing good which Providence has thrown in our way to be improved and accounted for. We will keep Henry until some better situation may

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be offered to him, and till then we will try to do our duty by him. I hope, however, that his principles are good; for, although I believe George to be a true child of God and under the influence of restraining grace, still, I would not wish him to be exposed unnecessarily to the temptations of evil companionship."

"I dare say the boy will have many bad habits to overcome," Mrs. Thorne answered; "for he has not been placed in a situation to learn much that is good. But, from the interest which your sister has taken in him, and from the little I have seen of him already, I am inclined to believe that he wishes to do what is right and will prove an apt scholar."

Mr. Thorne had barely time to express a hope that his wife's impressions might prove to be correct, when Henry and George appeared in sight; and, as he looked at the fine, open countenance of the stranger-boy, his hope that she might not be mistaken increased almost to a certainty. After making a very few inquiries as to what Henry had seen and what he thought of the horses, Mr. Thorne proposed that they

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should adjourn to the sitting-room for worship. Henry understood but imperfectly what the term "worship" meant; but he saw that he was expected to follow the family when they arose, and he did so.

The gathering of a household for the purpose of seeking the blessing of the Lord was something new and strange to him; but he presumed this to be an instance of one of the peculiarities which he had heard attributed to Mr. Thorne, and he prepared himself to observe with interest all the proceedings. The chapter which was read was the fifteenth of Luke, which contains the beautiful story of the Prodigal Son; and, although Henry could not understand its full meaning, yet he was able to see enough of its beauty to be highly pleased with it. He kneeled with the others during the prayer which followed, and listened to the words of each petition that was offered; yet the feeling which led him to do so was more that of a curious spectator than of an humble and earnest worshipper. When these services were concluded, he was oppressed with a sense of awkward discomfort, as if he did not belong to the group and had no right

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to be among them; and he stood a little apart from the rest, uncertain what to do. Just then, Ellen Thorne, the little girl before alluded to, left her father's side, and, walking timidly towards him, took hold of his hand. There was something very winning in the half frank, half shy manner of the little girl, and Henry involuntarily clasped the hand which was laid so confidingly within his own. She raised her eyes to his and said,—

"This is my home. Don't you think it a very nice place?"

"Yes; I think it is," Henry replied.

"Have you a *home* of your own?" she inquired.

The artless question of the little girl awakened new reflections in the mind of Henry; and for the first time in his life he was fully conscious of the utter desolateness of his situation in having no *home*. Almost every person that he had ever met with had some place that they might call by that name; and, if Mr. Thorne should not see fit to keep him, there was no house to which he could go feeling certain that its doors would be open to welcome or even

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receive him. As these thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, a sad sense of loneliness crept over him and almost forced the tears from his eyes. It was said of himself by the great Redeemer of mankind, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Jesus was more lonely and desolate in the earth than any of his creatures, and he could have sympathized with him and comforted him; and once, when he had attended the Sunday-school at Evandale for a little while, he had studied the verse, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And during the same short period the teacher had spoken frequently of the joys of heaven, and of its being a home of rest and happiness to those who were prepared for it; yet he did not once turn to Jesus for sympathy, nor think of heaven as a future home, where he might receive a welcome from God and the holy angels. He was seeking only for human friends and an earthly home, and his thoughts instantly reverted to the pleasant and spacious habitation which had been

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pointed out as the former residence of his grandparents. It had once been a home for them; and why might it not be a home for him at some future time? He determined at least to make an effort to get it. There were obstacles to this that to some might have seemed almost insurmountable; but the boy did not see them. His buoyant imagination was leaping forward regardless of all impediments, intent upon reaching the one great object. It did not take so long a time for these thoughts to pass in rapid succession through his mind as it has done for us to note them down; but it was long enough to make little Ellen wonder at not receiving an answer to her question, and she repeated it:—

"Say: haven't you a home of your own like this?"

"No," returned Henry, rather sadly. "I never had a home, since I can remember, like this one." "But I hope to have a happy home of my own when I am a man," he would have said; but, not being prepared to explain himself more fully, and feeling that he would not be understood if he did not, he forbore.

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"I am very, very sorry for you," replied the little girl; "but, if you are good and love God, you will have a home after a while."

"Where?" inquired Henry, startled, lest in some way the little girl had known the thoughts that had filled his mind while she waited for his answer.

"In heaven, where God and the angels live," replied the child, gazing up in his face with the pleased look of one who has just communicated some joyful news. But surprise at the unexpected answer which he had received to his question was the only emotion which Henry experienced. One single word of encouragement with reference to his final success in winning an earthly home would have excited warm feelings of gratitude and interest; yet he could listen with cold indifference to any thing that might be said of the holy and glorious city which God hath prepared for those that love him.

Not understanding his silence, little Ellen gently disengaged her hand from his and took her favourite position on her father's knee. Mr. Thorne entered into con-

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versation with Henry about Evandale and various matters that he thought might be interesting to him. But Henry had travelled over a rough road and was growing sleepy from the effect of the fatigue; and Mrs. Thorne, perceiving this, proposed that he should retire to bed, to which proposition he readily assented.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HOME.

HENRY slept very soundly on this his first night at Mr. Thorne's, and his first thought on awakening was surprise at the strangeness of every thing that surrounded him. It was some moments before he could distinctly realize *where* he was, or how he came there. Gradually he recalled to mind all that had occurred on the previous evening from the moment of his introducing himself to the family. They had all been kind to him,—Mrs. Thorne particularly. As he remembered her gentle manners, he felt a thrill of gratitude warming his bosom, and began to wish most sincerely that he had the power of showing her how much he appreciated her goodness. As before intimated, the religious services of family worship he presumed belonged to what he had considered the dark side of Mr. Thorne's character,—the "strait-laced notions" of

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which he had been told. Yet even this did not appear to him so very objectionable. It was not because he had any proper regard for the service as a fitting tribute of praise to the Lord, or of acknowledgment of dependence from the creature to the great Creator; but there was something pleasant and homelike in the idea of the whole family meeting together and engaging in the same exercise. He hoped earnestly that Mr. Thorne would conclude to employ him permanently; for he felt very sure that it would be extremely difficult for him to find a household in all respects equal to this one. Then his mind wandered off to the old home of his grandparents, where his father had been born and passed the days of his childhood, and he renewed his determination of striving with all his might to make it his own at some future day. But there was no time to be lost in idle reflections or fruitless determinations. If he expected to gain any thing at all, either in the present or future, he must be up and doing. He knew this perfectly well. Mr. Thorne was evidently an active man; and, if he wished to gain

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his favour, he must show himself diligent in his service. Anxious to make himself useful at once, if possible, he carefully laid away his best clothes, and attired himself in an inferior though still respectable-looking suit. He had scarcely finished dressing when he heard the loud ringing of a bell. He presumed it to be a summons to himself as well as the rest of the household, although uncertain for what purpose he might be called. He hastened down-stairs, and found the family assembling in the sitting-room for religious worship, as they did on the preceding evening.

When breakfast was over, Mr. Thorne called Henry to him and inquired if he still wished to live there.

"Oh, yes, sir!" replied Henry; "very much indeed, if you think I can be of use to you."

"That depends on circumstances," Mr. Thorne answered. "One of my men is about leaving, and I shall take you on trial to see if you will be able to fill his place. In doing so, I shall not, of course, expect you to work beyond your strength. You are only a boy, and it would not be reason-

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able to require a man's labor of you; but Roberts's work was not so very heavy, but rather that which needs care and forethought, which we do not often find in so young a person as you are."

"I would try my very best," said Henry. "Mr. Conner trusted me a great deal, and always considered me a careful boy."

"If you will do your best," replied Mr. Thorne, "that is the most I could expect of you; but until I understand exactly what that is I cannot very well come to terms with you."

"Sir?"

"I mean," Mr. Thorne answered, "that, until I know how much work you are capable of doing, I cannot say what wages you ought to have, or what I would like to give you. Are you willing to engage yourself to me for a month, on trust that at the end of that time I will pay you what is just?"

Henry was about to answer, hastily and readily, "Yes;" but the next moment he checked himself and hesitated. Mr. Thorne silently watched the earnest workings of his expressive countenance, wondering at the degree of caution evinced by so young a lad

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in making a bargain. If he had known the origin of his hesitation he might have been even more surprised. It was this. For the first time in his life the boy was learning to attach to money something of the importance which it has in the opinion of worldly-minded men. Heretofore its only value to him had been to spend for some immediate necessity. Now he had found a new purpose to which to apply it. The only way by which he could ever hope to gain possession of the old home of his grandfather was by the careful hoarding of small sums of money until they should have grown to the requisite sum, whatever that might be; and now the question for consideration was whether he might not receive higher wages than Mr. Thorne could offer. But the love of money had not yet taken so deep root in his young heart as to force out all other longings and desires. He felt that it would be much more agreeable to have a home with Mr. Thorne's family than among entire strangers. This feeling led him to incline towards accepting Mr. Thorne's terms, while the stronger reason that, unknown as he was in the neighbourhood, he might find

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it difficult to obtain other employment, decided him to do so. Besides this, he had sufficient confidence in Mr. Thorne to feel sure that in trusting to his honour he was not risking very much.

"If you would prefer going somewhere else, I would not wish to prevent it," said Mr. Thorne, not understanding his hesitation.

"I would much rather stay here and work with you, sir," Henry replied; "and I am sure you will be willing to pay me as much as I earn this month. Perhaps before very long I may be able to do more for you, and then you may see proper to give me higher wages."

"I shall certainly try to do my duty by you, Henry," Mr. Thorne answered; "and I think I can rely upon you to do the same."

Mr. Thorne took Henry to the stable, and, after showing him his morning's work, left him to attend to some business that required his supervision at the other end of his farm. Henry laboured diligently, full of a determination to please, and succeeded so far that when Mr. Thorne stopped, on

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his way to dinner, and saw what he had accomplished, he expressed himself quite satisfied. He was more thoughtful than boys usually are at the same age, and had a natural love of order; and every thing was done with care and precision. After tea, George Thorne showed him a small book-case filled with instructive and entertaining books, and gave him leave at any time to take those that he would like to read, upon condition that he would be careful to replace them. Henry could read very well, and he was quite fond of it, although previously his opportunities for indulging his taste were few. He selected one containing a description of Indian life, illustrated by coloured pictures.

"That is a large book, and it will take you a number of days to read it," said George.

"I will finish by Sunday night," replied Henry; "for I shall have very little work to do on Sunday, and I can have plenty of time to read then."

"But it will not do to read that book on Sunday," said George.

Henry had always considered himself as very properly employed on Sunday when

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reading a book, no matter what it contained; and now he but imperfectly understood his companion's meaning.

"Is it a bad book?" he inquired.

"Oh, no!" George replied. "My father would not allow me to have any bad or improper books."

"Then why shouldn't I read it on Sunday?" he asked.

"Because Sunday is a different day from any other, and we are only to use it in God's service, and not for our own entertainment."

"I never knew that it was wrong to read any good book on Sunday," said Henry.

"God tells us in the Bible that on the Sabbath we are to honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words," returned George.

These were strange words to Henry; and, while he was thinking of them, George continued:—

"I have some books in my bookcase that are suitable to read on Sunday: they are on the upper shelf. If you would like to have one you can choose for yourself."

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Henry supposed that these books must all be very dull and uninteresting, and that there could not be much of a choice between them. He carelessly took one from its place and mechanically began to turn over the leaves. It was the life of one of the earlier missionaries, and contained an account of his residence among the heathen. To his surprise, it seemed almost as inviting as the book about the Indians.

"That is a very good book," said George. "It taught me to be more grateful to God that he had given me my birth in a Christian country, and made me anxious to pray for the heathen and desire to do them good."

Henry took the book and laid it away in his room, ready for Sunday.

The rest of the week was spent as the first day in Mr. Thorne's employment had been. Henry continued to give satisfaction to both Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, and was becoming quite a favourite with the rest of the family.

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CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST SABBATH IN THE NEW HOME.

SUNDAY at Mr. Conner's was a comparatively idle day, and Henry, with the rest of the household, had been accustomed to rise later on that morning than others. Now, on his first Sabbath at Mr. Thorne's he prepared himself to indulge his old habit; but, to his surprise, the loud bell for morning-prayers rang at the usual hour. He sprang from his bed, concerned and mortified at the idea of appearing more tardy than the rest of the family, and, hastily dressing, went down to the sitting-room. Mr. Thorne was just finishing the chapter; but the small portion that remained to be read fell unheeded upon Henry's ear, and the prayer that followed might almost as well have been repeated in an unknown tongue, so far as its effect upon his mind was concerned. He was anxious and troubled about receiv-

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ing the favour of his fellow-men, but he cared little for that of the great God.

"You were late this morning, Henry," said Mr. Thorne, when the service was over.

"I did not think you would be up so early as usual this morning, sir," replied Henry.

"What made you think so?"

"I don't know very well, sir," Henry answered; "but we never got up as early at Mr. Conner's, and I suppose that it was because Sunday was a sort of idle day."

"Why should Sunday be spent any more idly than any other day?" Mr. Thorne asked.

"I don't know, sir," replied Henry, hesitatingly.

It seemed to him as if there *ought* to be some reason for this; but yet he had never heard one mentioned nor ever thought of the subject himself, and now, when unexpectedly questioned about it, he had none to give.

"Why is the Sabbath required to be kept differently from other days at all?" Mr. Thorne inquired.

Henry quickly recalled a portion of his recent conversation with George on the

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same topic, and, pleased with his newly-acquired information, he answered, readily,—

"It is God's day, and we ought not to do our own work then, but to go to church when we can, and learn about him. Besides, Mr. Thorne," he added, hastily, "it would not look respectable in us to work on Sunday just as we do on other days. People would think us no better than heathens."

The first part of his answer was given by rote, as he had learned it from George; the addition contained the real motive which would influence his own observance of the day.

"It is quite right to desire the good opinion of our neighbours," replied Mr. Thorne; "but the Sabbath belongs to God. He has set it apart for himself, and this ought to be our chief motive in making it differ from other days. God has given us six days out of seven for ordinary labour; but the seventh he has reserved for his special worship, not to be wasted by us in indolence, but to be occupied entirely in his service. God is very good; and, by obeying his commandments, we are greatly re-

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warded and our own best interests are very much advanced. By spending our Sabbaths in praising him and in striving to learn more of our duty to him, we are preparing ourselves for the eternal happiness of heaven and drawing down upon us the many blessings which he has promised to those that keep holy his Sabbath-days. But remember, Henry, they are to be kept holy,—not frittered away in sleep, or idly wasted."

The summons to breakfast interrupted the conversation, and, if Henry had an answer ready, prevented his giving it; but he seemed to have been listening attentively and respectfully, and Mr. Thorne hoped that it would prove to have been profitable to him.

"I shall be obliged to start for the Sabbath-school immediately this morning," said Mr. Thorne, as he arose from the breakfast-table, "as I promised yesterday to call with George on the way to see one of my scholars, who is quite sick."

Mr. Thorne had charge of the Bible-class connected with the village church.

Ellen's brow clouded.

"Must George go too?" she said, in a

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whining tone. "Then I shall have to walk all the way to Sunday-school alone!"

"Henry will go with you, I presume," replied her father; "for we shall be very glad to have him as a scholar."

Ellen looked inquiringly at Henry, and, much to her satisfaction, he readily expressed his willingness to accompany her at the proper time if she would show him the way.

Mr. Thorne and George departed on their errand of mercy, and Henry began the book he had laid aside for Sunday reading, in which he soon became so much interested as quite to forget the flight of time, until he heard Ellen's voice calling to him that it was time to go.

The church was situated at the farther end of the village, and their way lay directly past the house of Henry's grandfather. When they had reached it, he paused and looked through the high railings into the enclosure.

"Isn't it beautiful in there, Henry?" said Ellen, following his example and pressing her little fat face against the cold iron.

"Very beautiful," replied Henry; "but

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He paused and looked through the high railings into the enclosure. p. 90.

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can you tell me who lives here *now*, Ellen?" he inquired.

"Squire Burton," Ellen answered.

"My grandfather lived and died in this house, and my father was born here," said Henry, still gazing intently at the place.

Ellen expressed her surprise, and began to chat enthusiastically upon the beauty of some flowers which attracted her particular fancy, and Henry, scarcely heeding her presence, was musing upon the time when he might perhaps call that place his own. Presently the little girl noticed his abstraction.

"Don't you wish you could live in such a place, Henry?" she said, in a more decided tone.

The change of tone, and the words so directly in accordance with his own thoughts, arrested his attention.

"Yes, and *I mean to live here too, some time.*"

"*When?*" inquired Ellen, hastily adding, "Is Squire Burton going away?"

The matter-of-fact inquiry of the little girl quite surprised him.

"Oh, I do not know: I had not thought of Squire Burton moving at all, as it will

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be a very long time before I can get it," he replied, hastily.

"Oh!" Ellen answered, looking inquiringly towards him; for she scarcely understood his meaning.

Henry observed the earnest expression of the little girl's face, hesitated for a moment, and then entered into a full statement of the purpose which he had formed of one day owning Squire Burton's house and making it his own home.

"But it is all a secret, Ellen, and you must not tell any one," he said, doubting if it was right to have disclosed his plan even to her.

The child looked serious and concerned, and evidently thought a secret would be an important and troublesome matter in her keeping.

"Mayn't I tell my father and mother?" she inquired.

"No; no one at all," Henry replied.

"Then I'm sorry you told me about it," she answered.

By this time they were walking slowly along towards the church, and Henry was occupied by his musings, and made no reply.

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In a few moments Ellen interrupted him by saying,—

"I am afraid you won't get Squire Burton's house after all, Henry."

"Why not?"

"Because you have been *laying plans* on the Lord's day, and that is just as bad as doing work; and God will not bless you, I'm afraid."

"Why, Ellen, men who work on Sunday often get rich. Some of the richest people in Evandale hardly ever went to church, and never seemed to think about or care for God's blessing."

"Then their riches were not a blessing to them at all," said Ellen, seriously. "My father says that God sometimes lets people grow rich and have all they want in the world when they are wicked, as a curse to them, because they will not keep his commandments. Isn't that dreadful, Henry?"

Henry made no reply, but he looked concerned as he pondered upon the child's words. What if he should be allowed to become rich as a curse instead of a blessing?

Very soon, however, he found relief. "Some time or other I will be a good man

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like Mr. Thorne, and then God will make my riches a blessing," he whispered to his conscience, and for the present it was quieted. Yet there was nothing in this simple resolution, formed in his own strength, that ought to have silenced its voice: there is no lost soul in the world of despair, probably, that has not formed similar profitless resolutions. It was merely a suggestion of the deceitful heart, and was worth nothing.

"There is the church, and there are girls and boys going into the Sunday-school," said Ellen, pointing to a pleasant-looking frame church, into the basement of which a number of children of various sizes and ages were entering.

"There are father and George waiting for us," she continued. "Father will introduce you to Mr. Parsons, the superintendent, and he will put you in a class. You will like Mr. Parsons very much, I am sure; he will always remember you, and call you 'Henry' whenever he meets you, instead of making mistakes and forgetting your name, as some superintendents do."

Here they were met by Mr. Thorne and George, and, as Ellen had promised, Henry

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was duly introduced to Mr. Parsons and placed by him in a suitable class.

All was quite new and strange to Henry in the Sunday-school; but, on the whole, he liked it very much. After the exercises were over he followed the Thornes into church and took a seat with the family. The sermon was of such a nature as to be easily understood, and Henry ought to have been interested, for he might have gained a very large amount of useful knowledge from it; but he did not. His mind was intent upon the future, and his thoughts busy with plans that were to be put in practice when he should come into possession of Squire Burton's property. To the eye of a casual observer there would have seemed to be but a slight difference between the two boys who sat, side by side, in Mr. Thorne's pew upon that Sabbath morning. The countenances of both were singularly bright and intelligent; they were equally quiet and immovable during the service; and the eyes of both were apparently fixed upon the clergyman. Yet to the eye of the great God, who looketh upon the heart while man looks upon the outward appearance, a wide differ-

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ence was discernible. One was seeking an earthly home and earthly riches and honours; the other was looking forward to a better country, even a heavenly, and seeking to secure a crown of glory and a seat among the angels. Each was pressing forward with equal energy of purpose to reach the separate goals which they had chosen; and, different as they were, each was looking towards his own as the best adapted to supply the largest amount of happiness. By one the day was passed in laying uncertain plans to obtain that which, at the best, could only benefit him for a short time; while the blessed "inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and which fadeth not away," which its privileges were fitted to secure, had no place in his recollection; and, so far as regarded the purpose for which it had been given to him, the day was entirely lost. By the other it was spent in endeavouring to learn that which would fit him for a life of usefulness on the earth and for a whole eternity of happiness in heaven; and to him it had been all gain; for it had been employed as God had designed it should be.

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CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED LESSON.

THE long summer days had passed away, and the brightly-tinted autumnal leaves had dropped until the trees were bare, and the long winter nights had set in. Henry was still in Mr. Thorne's employment; and in all that time he had been treated with unremitting kindness by all, and his own conduct had been such as to give entire satisfaction.

The day had been dark and threatening; and now, as the night advanced, the first snow of the season fell. It was chilly and disagreeable out-of-doors;—just such weather as makes one fully conscious of the advantages of a sheltering roof and the enjoyment of a comfortable fireside. George Thorne had left home some weeks previous for a distant boarding-school, where he was to prepare to enter college; and the rest of the household were gathered in the pleasant

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sitting-room. Mr. Thorne was looking over the contents of the village newspaper, and occasionally reading aloud a paragraph which he thought might serve to amuse or interest some member of the family. Mrs. Thorne was mending piece after piece from a pile of newly-ironed articles of clothing, while her countenance wore the same expression of calm, quiet happiness which it had when we first introduced her to our readers. Henry was busy with a penknife and pieces of wood, of which he was forming skewers; yet his hands were not too busily employed to prevent his mind from being occupied. He was counting over the money which he had saved up; no, not counting it, for he was so perfectly familiar with the exact amount that it required no effort to sum it up; but he was calculating what additions he might hope to make in the next few months to the fifteen dollars which by strict economy and careful hoarding he had managed already to lay by. Ellen, seated at the table with her mother, was writing in a large home-made copy-book. Suddenly she laid down her pen, and inquired, with an earnest face,—

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"Father, what is it to be not rich towards God?"

She was copying from the Bible, and in the course of it this phrase arrested her particular attention.

"Those who are not able to lay claim to any part of the inheritance of God, or heaven, may be said to be not rich towards God," replied her father. "The whole verse," he continued, "if I mistake not, reads, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.' The Saviour is speaking of such persons as those whose whole souls are entirely bent upon getting riches and the other good things of this life for themselves, and care not to obtain the favour of God. But let me have your Bible, Ellen; I should like to have you read some of the verses that are immediately before and after that one and which refer to the same subject."

Ellen gave him her Bible, saying,—

"Wouldn't you rather have Henry read the verses than I, father? He can do it so much better."

"Well, then," said Mr. Thorne, passing the Bible to Henry, "if Henry has no ob-

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jection, I should like to have him begin at the fifteenth verse of this chapter and read on until I tell him to stop."

Henry's attention had been arrested by Ellen's first question, for it rather startled him; and now, without speaking, he took the book and began, in a slow, distinct voice,—

"And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."

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Henry hesitated. Conscience was at work applying the verses he had just read to his own case. Was not he engaged in laying up treasure for himself without caring for the riches which are from above? But, suddenly struck with the awkwardness of pausing just here when his friends were waiting to hear the rest of the passage, he was about proceeding, when his attention was arrested by hearing the sound of footsteps at the door. It opened almost immediately, and a lad about his own age, whom he recognised as living with Squire Burton, stood upon the threshold.

"Why, Charlie, what could have brought you here on such a night as this?" Mr. Thorne inquired, in surprise.

The boy had been running fast, with a strong wind driving the snow in his face all the way, and now he was forced to pause to recover his breath. Soon, however, he was able to answer, in a tolerably distinct voice,—

"Oh, Mr. Thorne, do please come as fast as you can to see Squire Burton! He is going on dreadfully, like one crazy, and poor Mrs. Burton is in such a bad state herself, on account of the children, that she

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can do nothing for him; so they sent me for you."

"But what is the matter with the children?" Mr. Thorne inquired; for he could not quite gather from the boy's incoherent statement the complete state of the case.

"The children died about an hour or so ago,—both of them; the little girl first, and the boy just after," replied the boy.

Mr. Thorne hastened to the scene of sorrow, while Mrs. Thorne and Ellen were filled with surprise and sympathy for the distressed parents. They had heard of the illness of the children, but had no idea that it was so severe.

"I must go and get Mr. Simpson to come," said the boy, hastily turning from the door.

Mr. Simpson was the village cabinet-maker and undertaker.

"Shall I go with you, sir?" inquired Henry of Mr. Thorne. "I might carry the lantern and help you to find the way, for it must be very dark out-of-doors."

In making this offer he was impelled partly by a desire to show himself accommodating to Mr. Thorne, and partly from a

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vague feeling of curiosity to ascertain the exact state of things in the family, but more particularly from the lively interest which he was disposed to take in all that related to that house, and a strong inclination to see the interior, which might now be gratified.

Mr. Thorne hesitated as to the necessity of needing such a guide; but Mrs. Thorne urged it:—

"Yes; do let Henry go with you. He will be company, and it is very dark."

Mr. Thorne smiled, and concluded, as Henry seemed to desire it, to allow him to go. He hoped that a visit to such a house of mourning might prove of service to him. It was indeed a toilsome walk to Squire Burton's that night, and required a much longer time than upon ordinary occasions; but at length they reached it safely, and without having experienced any unusual difficulty or danger. As they entered the enclosure, Henry distinctly remembered the pleasant Sabbath morning when he and Ellen had loitered along the way, peeping through at the house and grounds and envying its owners. They were certainly not

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to be envied at this moment. He thought of the beautiful day, with its balmy air, and involuntarily found himself making the proper application of the lesson which the comparison was designed to teach. Winter, cold and comfortless, had succeeded to the genial summer; night had silently followed the day; death had succeeded life:—all according to the usual course of nature. So it had happened in Squire Burton's household. Mourning had taken the place of gladness, darkness of light, death of life. Nor was this state of things peculiar to one family. All were alike subject to the same vicissitudes. Nature might be conscious of no deeper shadow than that which now surrounded him; yet here the analogy ended, for he knew that this was not the case with immortal beings like himself. For them there might be a world on which rests a more enduring darkness than any that nature here could know,—a cloud which might never be dissipated, and an anguish too sharp and lasting for any earthly type to foreshadow. There was a way of escape from this fearful destiny. There was a place where no night nor shadow of death is

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known. Yet he was aware that this was not to be found in any human habitation nor earthly possession; and for the moment he felt how vain and trifling is all that he had been striving after with such earnestness and hope, compared with the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Something of the old feeling of curiosity possessed him, however, when, after carefully shaking the loose snow from their garments, with subdued tread he followed Mr. Thorne into the wide hall; but this was once more banished as he beheld the sorrowful countenances of those whom they met, reminding him so distinctly that he was in the very presence of death.

"Will you please to walk in here, sir? Mr. Burton is in his study, and I will tell him that you are here," said a woman, showing the way into a small room on one side of the hall.

The room opened into the study, and Henry could hear the heavy step of some one rapidly pacing the floor. In a low tone the woman told the squire that Mr. Thorne had come. There was a moment's pause,

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and then a hoarse and unnatural voice replied, quickly and impatiently,—

"He can come in, I suppose."

"Mr. Burton says he will see you in his study," said the woman, almost immediately after, opening the door and leaving it ajar that Mr. Thorne might go in. He too had heard the very ungracious manner with which the invitation had been given; but he felt a true sympathy with the bereaved father, and hoped to be able to do him some good by pointing to the only true source of comfort; and he was not inclined to resent it. He went into the study and left Henry alone in the outer apartment.

After the first few words of kind greeting had been offered by Mr. Thorne, there was silence once more, only broken by the same firm and measured foot-falls and an occasional sob or groan of agony from the afflicted man. The sound of footsteps ceased. Mr. Burton had taken a seat near to his visitor, Henry presumed; for he could overhear Mr. Thorne repeating in a low tone what seemed to be passages of Scripture designed to give comfort to those in such circumstances. In the midst of this

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his attention was attracted by a slight noise at the door which opened into the hall; and, upon looking in that direction, he saw Charles, who had returned from his errand to Mr. Simpson's and now stood beckoning Henry towards him. He went softly over to the door.

"I thought maybe you might want to see the children," said Charlie, in a low whisper. "I can take you up-stairs to where they are lying if you do."

Henry nodded assent, and followed him along the hall.

"They are still in the nursery, where they died, and, the folks say, are looking beautiful, just as if they had fell asleep," continued Charlie, in a rather louder tone than before, for they were ascending the stairway, and were quite out of Squire Burton's hearing now.

When they had reached the farther end of the passage Charlie opened the door and led the way into the apartment. Upon the bed lay the bodies of the children in their night-clothes. This was probably the first time that Henry had ever witnessed such a scene; and the unnatural and rigid appear-

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ance of death startled him, and he turned involuntarily away. But there was some strange charm in the sight that arrested his gaze, it would seem almost against his will; for in a moment his eyes were again fixed with earnest expression upon the insensible forms before him, although he still shrank back from them. He wondered, as he recalled Charlie's words, how any one could think them "beautiful;" for, in his view, there was not even the slightest resemblance to "*sleep*," such as the living might take. Yet they had once been beautiful and full of life and activity. He remembered having seen them sporting playfully upon the lawn but a few weeks previous; yet now it seemed almost impossible to realize the truth of this fact, although he knew it to be so. Children's shoes and stockings, with other articles of clothing, bearing evident tokens of having been recently worn, and various toys, were scattered about in different parts of the room; and it was hard to believe that these would never more administer to the enjoyment or amusement of the busy little creatures who had once owned them. He had been in the

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habit of regarding Squire Burton's children as the expected possessors of that which he hoped to gain, and they had appeared somewhat in the light of rivals to him and aroused his envy; but they were not objects for envy or rivalry now.

The same fate was in store for himself. At some future time—it might be very soon, for he could not tell *when*—his own body must lie senseless and motionless as those little ones were lying; his soul would be where no earthly riches could be of any avail,—where only the "treasure laid up in heaven" could be of value; and he had not made the slighest effort to secure for himself wealth of this sort.

His musings were interrupted by Mr. Simpson, who had come to make some of the necessary arrangements preparatory to the burial; and he turned away from the bed and silently went down-stairs to wait for Mr. Thorne in the room in which he had first been shown.

It was Mr. Burton's voice which now fell upon his ear from the adjoining apartment.

"All that I have cared for and striven

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for in life is taken away," he exclaimed, "and I have no object to live for now. You may talk coolly to me about submission, Mr. Thorne, as much as you please; but this is too severe a trial for me, and I cannot bear it with any thing like submission. For years I have been toiling and saving for *their* benefit. In that very desk you will find deeds and mortgages and money hoarded up which are quite useless now. They are the hard earnings of toilsome days and weary nights, carefully accumulated and stored away for those whom they can never benefit now."

"Our Father in heaven has taken your little ones away from the evil to come," said Mr. Thorne, gently.

"But I could not spare them. I wanted them here," Mr. Burton replied.

"God has only taken what he had lent you for a season, but what really belonged to himself," returned Mr. Thorne; "and all that *he* does is right. You cherished your children and strove for what you considered their good, and never needlessly punished or annoyed them. God is quite as tender and considerate a father to his children as

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you could have been to your's, and has only done what he knew to be for the best."

"He is not my Father! I have never called him by that name!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, angrily.

"But he will be your Father if you desire it," said Mr. Thorne, in the same gentle tone as before; "and he is very pitiful and of tender mercy. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.'"

"Nothing can comfort me but having my children again; and it is too late for that," Mr. Burton answered.

Mr. Thorne once more replied with some kind promise from the Bible for those who are willing to suffer affliction patiently; but Mr. Burton was quite hardened, and resolutely refused to receive consolation from such a source. His language began to display such a depth of rebellion against God and *his* providence that it would not be well to repeat it to young readers. It startled Henry, and made him see something of the evil tendency of idols in hardening the heart towards heavenly things. He wished most earnestly that the inter-

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view would close, so that he might leave the house as soon as possible. It seemed dreadful, even to him, to be even in the neighbourhood of one so completely at open variance with his Maker. Mr. Thorne was soon convinced of the utter uselessness of arguing the point under such circumstances; and, after a few more words and a silent petition to the God of all grace, he bade Mr. Burton good-night.

As they were about leaving the house, the woman who had met them when they first came inquired whether Mr. Thorne would not like to see Mrs. Burton. Mr. Thorne assented, in hopes that his effort to be of service might be more successful in her case than it had been in her husband's, and Henry followed on as before and took a seat unobserved in the corner. Her grief was more quiet, but not less deep, than his had been. She looked so pale and sorrow-stricken that Henry's heart ached for her. The blow had come so suddenly upon her that it had stunned her; and she seemed scarcely to realize it. When Mr. Thorne tried to administer consolation to her, she simply thanked him, and in so few words

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that it was impossible to ascertain what effect, if any, had been produced. Like her husband, she had had one great object in life; and, now that this had been defeated, all before her presented but a wretched blank. Her idols had fallen from their place in her heart, and she seemed unable even to imagine the possibility of any thing ever filling the vacant niches. They arose to go, and she walked mechanically to the door to see them out of the apartment. Henry turned to look at her, and was struck with the cold, immovable appearance which she presented, standing in the doorway with the light from the hall-lamp falling upon her face,—so ghastly and despairing in its expression,—and silently acknowledged to himself the folly of having desired and striven so earnestly for a home where so much misery could exist with so little hope of alleviation.

They were now at home. Mrs. Thorne's first care was to make them comfortable; and for this purpose, with Ellen's assistance, she had prepared dry shoes and stockings for both, a coat for Mr. Thorne, and a jacket for Henry. The fire looked brighter

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to Henry, and the countenances of the mother and daughter even more happy and pleasant than ever, in contrast with the scene he had just left; and it was with a considerable degree of satisfaction that he received the kind attentions that were offered to him. He felt that it was something very delightful to have such a nice home as this. When they had succeeded in divesting themselves of their damp garments, and, with dry clothes, were comfortably seated once more in their accustomed places, Mrs. Thorne and Ellen listened to the story of the Burtons' affliction.

"Oh, it is very sad to be thus bereft!" said Mrs. Thorne, while large tears filled her eyes and her voice grew tremulous.

Ellen drew close to Henry and whispered,—

"We—George and I—had a little brother and sister who died before we were born, and for a long time after that our father and mother had no children."

This was the first time that Henry had ever heard of Mr. and Mrs. Thorne's bereavement; and he now saw that sorrowful memories had helped to swell the tear of sym-

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pathy that trembled upon the mother's eyelids. For some moments Mrs. Thorne sat in silence, her face covered with her hands.

"We are quite satisfied now, are we not, dear," Mr. Thorne said, gently, "that our children should be with our Father in heaven?"

"Oh, yes! So far as I know my own heart, even in the very hour of affliction I think I was enabled to say, truly, 'The Lord's will be done;' and, in all the years that have passed since, I have never seen cause to take back my words. As I have looked upon the many temptations and trials that would probably have beset them if they had still lived, I have been most thankful that they were safe in heaven and quite free from danger of every sort."

"It would be a happy thing for Mr. and Mrs. Burton if they had some of your faith," said Mr. Thorne. "Our bereavement has been the means of drawing us nearer to God than ever, I think, while the Burtons, I fear, will be removed even farther still from him."

"It is God who gave us strength to bear our trials and grace to improve them," Mrs.

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Thorne answered. "He has been indeed our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

"I was forcibly reminded to-night," continued Mr. Thorne, "of the utter vanity of all worldly possessions. But a few days since Squire Burton was regarded as having every thing necessary to make a man happy, so far as earth is concerned. Yet by one blow he is deprived of all; his children are gone, and his wealth has lost its charm and cannot yield him the comfort that he needs. Through the mercy of God we have a more enduring blessing—'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away'—reserved in heaven."

"That is just what we were talking about when Charles came for you, father," said Ellen. "Don't you remember Henry was reading about the man who was not rich towards God? Mr. and Mrs. Burton are not rich towards God, or they would have something to look to for comfort now."

"Yes, I remember," replied her father; "Henry had not quite finished the whole of the verses which I wished to hear. Find the right chapter in your Bible, Ellen, and

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perhaps he will read the remainder for us now."

Ellen gave the Bible to Henry, opened at the twelfth chapter of Luke, and he began where he had left off,—reading the whole of the beautiful counsel of the Saviour to his disciples:—

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls!"

When he had finished to the words "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Ellen said,—

"Whenever I hear the little birds sing, and look at the pretty flowers after this, I will always remember that it is our Father in heaven who feeds the birds and takes care of the flowers; and then I shall know that, if I love him as the disciples did, he will take much better care of me than of either."

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"If you will exercise this simple faith and trust, Ellen dear," said her mother, "you will never be over-anxious about obtaining mere earthly good, and God will give you as much as is needful for you."

Henry, too, had been struck with the sweet and simple yet sublime words which he had been reading; and now, as he listened to Ellen's application of them, and her mother's answer, he thought there could be nothing on earth more beautiful and desirable than just such humble confidence in God as their's. Nothing more seemed needed; they had the promise both of this life and of that which is to come. Serious thoughts filled his mind that night upon retiring to rest. Conscience urged upon him the duty of seeking *first* the "kingdom of God and his righteousness," instead of spending all his time and energy to gain what in itself could not yield him the happiness which he desired. It seemed very easy to perform this simple duty. All that was required was merely that he should cease to trouble himself about his future worldly prospects, go on calmly doing what he knew to be right, and leave the rest in

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the hands of God, feeling sure that all needful blessings would be added unto him. In this way he should secure a reasonable share of happiness when every thing prospered in life, strength to bear its trials, and a solace in the hour of affliction, and, when death came to call him away from earth, a home of joy forever in the world to come. The prospect looked very inviting, and he thought himself quite determined and ready to tread the path to heaven without further delay. In his imagination, nothing appeared to be wanting; and, as far as mere *human reliance* went, nothing was wanting.

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CHAPTER X.

THE RESOLUTION AND ITS TEST.

HENRY awoke the next morning full of his new determination to commence a Christian life. The first thing which he did was to make a long and elaborate prayer, as nearly as he could after Mr. Thorne's manner. He was not quite so successful in this attempt as he could have wished; yet, when it was finished, he considered it a matter of inward congratulation that he had been able to do so well. He had no sorrow for sin, or sincere hatred of it, in his heart, as he kneeled there professedly to offer prayer to the Lord; nor had he true humility or a desire for the glory of God. It was presented directly to God in a spirit of self-righteousness,—in his own name; and God did not hear it. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off." His next step was to read

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a few verses in the Bible by the dim light of morning. He regretted not having it in his power to read a whole chapter; but the shortness of the winter's day gave him but a small portion of light before breakfast. He then met the family at worship; and this duty, as well as the ordinary routine of daily engagements, was performed pretty much as usual. He had always been correct in his outward deportment, and now his conduct differed in no respect from what it had been. The command, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," had no place either in his heart or memory. For several days he persevered in this plan, although many times it was very reluctantly performed.

About this time a clergyman came to Greensburg, to make an appeal to the church which the Thornes attended, in behalf of a poor congregation of which he was the pastor. The circumstances were these. A feeble congregation, after a great many efforts, at last succeeded in building a house of worship for themselves. It was neither handsome nor expensive, but it was neat

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and substantial, and the best they could afford. It had been finished but a few months, when some evil-minded person set it on fire, and in a few hours it was burned almost to the ground. It would require several hundred dollars to put it in order again; and, as the congregation had quite exhausted their means in its erection, they were now obliged to apply to their charitable friends in their further need. The story, as told by their self-denying pastor, was a sad one, and many were deeply interested in it. Among these were the Thornes; and as Mr. Wells, the pastor referred to, was visiting at Mr. Thorne's house, Henry heard the subject discussed very frequently. Being naturally of a generous disposition, from the first he felt inclined to give a liberal donation,—perhaps the whole of his hoarded treasure. This, he felt, would be but carrying out his new intention, for giving the money for this sacred object would be like laying it up in heaven and being rich towards God. Another and more earthly motive was blended with it, however, although he was scarcely conscious of its existence himself. He was fond of the praise of man;

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and his imagination lingered with delight upon the encomiums which he would probably receive when the largeness of his gift should be known.

But in Henry's heart was implanted a stronger principle than either of the feelings just mentioned, whose root remained as firmly fixed now as before his determination. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of the world still reigned as supremely in Henry's heart as ever before, although for a time it had seemed to have been divested of its original power. He had postponed paying his donation, or even mentioning its amount, until the last hour of Mr. Wells's stay; and now he began to feel very loath to place all his money so entirely out of his reach. There were the five dollars which Mrs. Grey had so kindly given to him: it certainly would not do for him to part with that. It was a sort of me-

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mento of an old friend, and must be kept. So he laid it back safely in the corner of his trunk. With a slow, unwilling hand he turned over the remainder of his money. Ten dollars! It seemed like a very large sum, even after the deduction, for him to give:—more than was expected of him, he was sure. As he hesitated, a new thought occurred to him. It might not be right for him to give away so much, for he was but a poor and almost friendless boy, after all, and he might be sick and need all that he could save for his future support. The beautiful lesson of simple faith and trust in God taught by the flowers and the birds, and his own resolution to follow their example, were quite forgotten. He very deliberately took from the sum a quarter of a dollar, and then, after carefully replacing the rest in the snug corner where it belonged, and locking his valise, he carried it to Mr. Wells, with a lingering regret that he had been thus *obliged* to break in even so far upon his hoard. Mr. Wells knew nothing of the secret feelings of his heart, and, thinking the amount as much as the boy could afford to give, expressed his satisfaction, and

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thanked him for the gift thus bestowed in the Lord's cause. God saw plainly all that had passed through his mind from the beginning; and in *his* sight it was not an acceptable offering to him. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Only once did Henry's conscience reproach him for thus withholding that which at first, in his heart, he had purposed to give to the Lord. It was when Ellen brought her offering to her father to give to Mr. Wells. The money was carefully done up in a piece of white paper. Without unfolding it, Mr. Thorne inquired,—

"What portion of your money is here, Ellen?"

"A dollar, father," she replied.

"Why, that must be *all* you have!" said Mr. Thorne, in evident surprise.

"No; I have a quarter of a dollar and five cents still. The quarter of a dollar is to help to buy shoes for poor little Susan Gray; and then, you know, father, I ought to keep five cents for the missionary collection next Sunday," she answered, in a half-apologetic

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tone, as if her conduct required an excuse, or, at least, an explanation.

"Yes, I think you were quite right to remember poor little Susan and the missionary-box," said her father; "but I understood that you were saving the dollar to buy a bookcase, now that your box has become too small to hold your books."

"I did mean to try to buy a bookcase; but that was before I heard of the burnt church, father," she replied.

Mr. Thorne paused for a while as if he were thinking the matter over, and then he said,—

"But you know, Ellen, that good people in old times only gave the *tenth* part of their property for benevolent purposes, and now a great many Christians do not give even so much as that."

"I know, father," replied the little girl; "but I would rather a great deal give my money to help to build a place for God's worship than do any thing else with it, even to buy a bookcase."

"That is right, Ellen," Mr. Thorne answered; "God loves a cheerful giver, and

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I have no doubt that *he* will accept and bless your offering."

Henry was half inclined to go up-stairs to his trunk and bring down a portion or *all* that remained of his money; but he checked the impulse, and allowed an important opportunity of benefiting his fellow-man to pass unimproved.

A night-school was formed in Greensburg for the purpose of teaching the higher branches of learning to a limited number of young men. Henry applied and was admitted into the class. And now his ambition took a new turn; and he determined, if close study and earnest attention could do it, that he would succeed in acquiring an education that would fit him to fill the position in life which he hoped at some future time to occupy. From that moment every spare minute was most scrupulously devoted to this purpose; and it was easy to perceive that, if his resolution to become religious was not made in sincerity, the present one was. The passages in the Bible set apart for daily reading became gradually fewer and his prayers shorter, until the first ceased almost entirely, and

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the last dwindled down to a few hurried words, uttered carelessly and from no higher motive than merely to help to silence the voice of conscience.

There was nothing wrong in his desiring to improve himself in useful knowledge, or in his making earnest efforts to become a respectable and honoured citizen of the community; but it was wrong for him to make this the one great object of life to the total disregard of the higher claims of religion. He was striving once more with all his might and soul and strength to prepare himself for the few short years of a lifetime, and scarce bestowing a thought upon the long ages of eternity towards which he was so rapidly hastening.

The idea of living in Squire Burton's house had been too long associated in Henry's mind with his high hopes of future prosperity to be readily abandoned; and very soon he began to lay plans for the accomplishment of this purpose, just as he had previously done. The scene of distress and bereavement which he had witnessed there would constantly recur to his memory, causing a painful doubt as to the certainty

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of his finding the perfect happiness there which he was anticipating; yet these uneasy forebodings were quickly banished, and were not allowed to interfere materially with his speculations.

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CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

About seven years from the time when Henry made his first appearance at Greensburg, his small valise was again placed upon Mr. Thorne's piazza, by the side of a large-sized trunk, upon which was inscribed, in distinct characters, the initials "H. M." Once more he was going out into the world to seek a new home, and—as in the first instance—of his own free will and contrary to the wishes of his employer. His motive, too, for making this second change was the same as upon the former occasion,—a desire to better himself in worldly substance.

Mr. Thorne was growing old, and, although still able and willing to engage in active pursuits, yet he had begun to feel more and more the necessity of obtaining rest a portion of his time,—bodily rest from severe daily labour, and rest for his mind from the burden of directing the affairs of a large

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farm. He had proposed retaining a small part of his land to cultivate at his leisure, and renting the remainder to Henry for a reasonable compensation. George had now finished his theological course, and was about settling as pastor of a congregation some miles distant. Mr. Thorne had no other son; and, having a regard for Henry almost equal to that felt by a parent, and desiring still to keep him as an inmate of his house, he had been led to make this offer. It would have been considered a most advantageous one to most young men so circumstanced, for the farm was capable of yielding a very comfortable income; but Henry was differently inclined. He had been able to save three hundred dollars from his wages, and by fortunate speculations and profitable investments he had succeeded in increasing this sum to more than twice its original amount. The shrewd ones in the neighbourhood spoke of him as having a remarkably good business talent, and prophesied that he would live to count his thousands; and he himself believed it would be so. To his aspiring mind it seemed absurd for one possessing such ca-

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pacities to waste his energies in toiling upon a farm for single dollars when he might be reaping hundreds in a large city. He had been waiting for some time for a favourable opportunity, and this had at length occurred. An enterprising gentleman had left Greensburg to engage in a new and extensive business operation; and he had told Henry that, if he succeeded, he should be glad to secure his services at a liberal salary; for the young man's attainments and abilities were widely known and appreciated in that retired country-neighbourhood. A few weeks previous he had fulfilled his promise by making him a good offer, which he had joyfully accepted; and now he stood in the hall, ready for the journey.

As the time fixed for his departure approached, he began to realize in some degree the inestimable value of what he was leaving. He had spent years of happiness and comfort in that quiet household. Would he find the same amount in the noisy life he was seeking? His eye sought the direction of his father's old homestead, still in the possession of Squire Burton, and he dismissed the uneasy feeling to

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look forward in imagination to the time when he should return from the city, rich and respected, to make himself a new home there. If he continued in his present irreligious state, one thing would be wanting to make any home which he should form such a one as Mr. Thorne's,—a grateful, contented mind, and a simple, immovable trust in all the dealings of a heavenly Father; yet this deficiency was quite overlooked.

It wanted nearly an hour of the time fixed for the stage to call. Yet all his arrangements were completed; and he walked up and down the hall, with the uneasy motion of one impatient to be off, although quite conscious of being about to leave behind much that is desirable. Presently a hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned suddenly round, and there was Mr. Thorne.

"Can I see you alone for a few minutes, Henry?" he inquired, moving towards the door of a small room that opened into the hall.

Henry followed and took the seat that was offered to him.

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"I could not let you go, Henry," Mr. Thorne began, "without asking you one question, which has caused me many an anxious thought and much uneasiness of mind. I have thought much of your prospects for the future. How is your mind disposed on the subject of religion? Do you love your Saviour?"

Henry's eyes were bent with a perplexed look upon a button, which his fingers were twisting and untwisting. He returned no answer; and Mr. Thorne continued:—

"In the midst of my anxiety I have sometimes hoped that this might be so. Your external conduct has been so correct, and you have shown such strict regard for all the forms of religion, that it seemed not improbable that you might be worshipping with your heart as well as your lips."

A slight expression of satisfaction rested upon Henry's features for a moment; but it quickly subsided, as he replied, in a firm tone,—

"I am very glad, Mr. Thorne, that you think I merit this commendation; but I would not deceive either myself or you.

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Henry's eyes were bent with a perplexed look upon a button which his fingers were twisting and untwisting. p. 134.

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Whatever there has been in my conduct that appeared right in your eyes proceeded from some other motive than love to God. I am not conscious of any feeling in my heart that should lead me to believe that it has been changed and that I am now a Christian."

"And have you no desire to be one?" inquired Mr. Thorne.

"Yes, sir," Henry answered, with earnestness; "I have sometimes felt that I would be glad to have just such faith and confidence in God as yourself, Mrs. Thorne, and George and Ellen. It seemed so beautiful to have the great Jehovah for a friend and helper, rather than to think of him as a stern judge to be feared, and avoided if possible."

Mr. Thorne paused for a moment, and then said,

"You may think, Henry, that I have been very remiss in having spoken to you so seldom upon the subject of personal religion during the many years that you have been with us. In my younger days I was much in the habit of speaking out my mind

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freely to any whom I saw following a wrong course, and, I began to fear, with less discretion than should have been observed. In trying to correct this, of late years, I may have erred on the other side, in remaining silent when I might have spoken a word in season. I scarcely slept last night, as I considered this matter, from a fear that I had proved an unprofitable servant in withholding the gospel-knowledge with which my Master has intrusted me, and so, perhaps, causing one for whom Christ died to remain a blind wanderer from the way of life."

He spoke earnestly and feelingly, and Henry saw that every word spoken came from a heart oppressed with the consciousness of having done a great wrong. He felt that he alone was to blame, and he said, hastily,—

"If you have not told me in so many words, Mr. Thorne, that I ought to be just such a one as yourself, your whole life has done so, in so beautifully illustrating the nature of true religion as to make it appear in its most attractive form. The blame of

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my having never followed your example must lie somewhere else than with you or any member of your family."

"I have tried to evince the deep interest I have felt in your soul's welfare in other ways rather than words," Mr. Thorne continued; "but, now that the time of parting has come, I will endeavour to show you openly where the fault in your case principally rests. You speak of the beauty of holiness, and highly approve of it as seen in the daily walk of Christians; but you look at it pretty much as you would upon a fine landscape or painting, or any thing else fitted to attract the eye alone. The Saviour—who is the bright pattern of all true excellence on earth—appears to you but as a root out of dry ground, and you see no beauty to desire in *him*. There was a class of whom the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel, 'They hear thy words, but will not do them; for their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but

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they do them not.' You may have even felt upon many occasions a desire to be one of that happy band whom God delights to honour; but it has originated from a similar motive to that which influenced Balaam, when, after witnessing the prosperity and happiness of God's people, he exclaimed, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' Like the sons of Zebedee, you desire a certain thing of the Lord. You are quite willing to occupy a high position in his kingdom of glory; but you are not willing to drink of the cup which the Saviour drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism which he was baptized with; to be poor and homeless, and to suffer shame and scorn for *his* sake. You have not that faith which would lead you to prefer suffering affliction with the people of God to enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. You do not esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Without this faith it is impossible to please God. You shall seek him and find him when you search for him with all your heart."

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Henry sat with his face turned away from Mr. Thorne. He was not angry; for he felt that every word which had been uttered was true. He could not but acknowledge that in his heart he was not really prepared to be a disciple of the Saviour through evil report as well as good; but conversion does not necessarily follow conviction of sin, and he had no satisfactory answer to give.

After a slight hesitation, Mr. Thorne resumed:—

"'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' You may live a life of toil, spending your strength for worldly gain; yet, even if you should succeed in obtaining all that you seek for, you will find it at the last unsatisfactory and of no real value. Of what profit is any mere earthly good if in striving for it we allow our own souls to be lost? Is there any thing for which you would be willing to exchange your soul? It is not a difficult thing to lose the soul, and there need be no effort made of necessity to accomplish its destruction. All

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that is required is that you remain in your present position, maintaining an open respect for the ordinances of religion but neglecting it in your heart. You need not turn your foot aside or strain a muscle to reach the world of woe: the road which you now acknowledge yourself to be treading leads to it naturally enough, and all that you need do is to continue on in it. On the contrary, if you would find the Lord, you must search for him with your whole heart, and, if you would walk in the narrow way, you must strive to enter in at the strait gate."

The rumbling sound of heavy wheels announced the approach of the stage and obliged Mr. Thorne to close his words of warning; but their effect lingered still upon his earnest and expressive face, as he took an affectionate leave of Henry.

Mrs. Thorne and Ellen were in the hall waiting for them, both wearing sorrowful countenances at the prospect of parting with one whom for years they had regarded as a member of their household. For a few moments Henry wondered how he

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could have entertained any motive sufficiently strong to induce him to turn away from such true friends, perhaps forever. But he had no time to spare now for useless regrets, and he was obliged to take a hasty leave of them.

"You will write very frequently to us, Henry, and, as often as you can be spared from business, make us a visit?" said Mrs. Thorne.

"Certainly," he replied, readily. "Wherever I may go, or under whatever circumstances I may be placed, I shall never forget the great kindness that I have experienced here."

"If the world into which you are going should not prove as pleasant a resting-place as you have imagined it might be, remember that you have a home and friends here, who will always be ready to receive and sympathize with you," Mr. Thorne said, giving him his hand.

Henry's grateful look as he pressed it was more expressive than any words that he could have uttered. By this time the trunk was put upon the stage, and Henry

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was soon on his journey from the best home that he had ever known. He had not proceeded far when he took from his pocket a neatly-folded slip of white paper, which Ellen had placed in his hand at parting. He found written upon it these words :—

"They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Since the pleasant Sabbath morning when he had first poured into her childish ear the story of his determination to be rich and great as well as good, and to secure for himself, if possible, the old homestead of his ancestors, and received her simple rebuke for having broken the law of God, Henry had never once renewed the conversation in her presence, or alluded to the fact that the resolution of his boyhood had not been shaken by passing years. Mr. Thorne, with all his penetration, had

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failed to perceive distinctly the real stumbling-block that stood in the way of his becoming a Christian; but Ellen had never forgotten the secret intrusted to her so long before, and, with an observant eye, she had silently marked its fatal influence upon him increasing rather than diminishing with the lapse of years.

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CHAPTER XII.

A GLIMPSE AT THE PAST.

We must now revert to an incident in Henry's previous history.

He had been in Mr. Thorne's employment for more than a year, when he one day received a letter through the post-office. It was postmarked "Evandale;" and he instantly recognised it as coming from Mrs. Grey. Upon opening it he found a few hurried lines informing him of the serious illness of his father, and urging him to use all haste in coming to him if he wished to see him alive. The only stage that left Greensburg for that quarter had already gone, and, as it went only every other day, there would be none the next morning; but, when Mr. Thorne understood the circumstances of the case, he sent Henry over to the nearest town, where he should find a conveyance for the next day. He stopped

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at the lane where he had once watched the smoke curling from Mrs. Grey's chimney, and walked rapidly along until he had reached the house. The door was closed; but he had only time to lay his hand upon the latch, when it was opened from the inside by Mrs. Grey. She had perceived him approaching from an upper window, and had hastened to admit him that no time might be lost. The greeting between them, though cordial, was very short, and then he inquired,—

"How is my father, Aunt Grey?"

"Not any better, Henry," she replied: "he is just alive now. The clergyman is with him, and the doctor left but a few minutes ago."

"Has Mr. Anderson been often to see him?" Henry asked, as he laid down his valise and took off his cap preparatory to going to his father's room.

He waited anxiously for her answer; for he was sufficiently acquainted with his father's habits to know that he had not prepared himself for death while in health, and he clung to the hope that perhaps

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he might have been making the effort during his illness.

"Mr. Anderson isn't the clergyman now. He left here just after you went away," she replied. "But Mr. Mason, who has come in his place, has been to see him every day. He is a nice man, and does a great deal of good among the Evandale people."

The last few words were spoken in a whisper, for they were ascending the stairway, and had nearly reached the chamber.

Mr. Mason, the clergyman,—a young man with a mild and serious countenance,—stood at the head of the bed, wiping the dampness from the sick man's forehead, when they entered. Henry was shocked and alarmed at the change which a few weeks' sickness had produced in him, and feelings of pity and commiseration filled his breast. He was convinced that his father must die; and, although he had never acted a father's part and the loss to himself would be but nominal, yet the thought was painful in the extreme.

"It is sleep," said Mr. Mason, thinking, from the expression of the boy's counte-

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nance, that he might be mistaking the deep sleep for death. "He will awake, I suppose, before"—he hesitated, and then added,—"before the last change will take place."

Henry understood him perfectly well. Mrs. Grey joined them, and the three stood silently by, waiting for some alteration in the wan features of the dying man. The closed eyes opened, and he became sufficiently conscious to recognise his son, pronounce his name, and murmur something which those around interpreted into an admonition to him. Then the eyes closed forever.

Further inquiry of Mr. Mason and Mrs. Grey failed to disclose to Henry any thing very satisfactory of his father's previous state of mind. He had listened respectfully when Mr. Mason talked to him upon religious subjects, and had on one or two occasions asked to have the Bible read to him; and upon this slender reliance his friends founded a faint hope that he might possibly be saved at last.

Mrs. Grey asked Henry a number of

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questions about her brother and his family, and Henry repeated several kind messages which Mr. Thorne had sent to her. She looked sad while she listened to them, and, when Henry was quite ready to return again to his home, she said,—

"I feel as if I could hardly bear to have you go away and leave me, Henry: it seems like losing the only friend I have in all the world."

"Mr. Thorne is your friend," Henry replied; and he mentioned some instances to prove his assertion.

When he had finished speaking, she remained silent for a while, and then said,—

"Once I thought it was as well or better to live alone,—that my own company was the least troublesome that I could have; but lately I have known many sad and wearisome hours, when I would have given a great deal to have seen one friendly face or heard one kind voice. And often there have been hard and sorrowful feelings in my heart that I might have put away entirely if I could have whispered them to another ear; but there was none near to whom I cared to tell them, and they have grown

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stronger and stronger. You may say that it is my own fault that I am so very lonely; but that doesn't make the trial any easier to bear."

Henry sympathized with her, and determined in his own mind to bring about a reconciliation between her brother and herself. He did not imagine any great difficulty in accomplishing this; for he saw that Mrs. Grey was prepared for it, and he knew Mr. Thorne's principles so well that he felt perfectly sure that he would obey the rule laid down in the word of God:—"Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

He bade her farewell with this earnest hope; and he was not disappointed. Mr. Thorne wrote a kind letter, urging her to make them a long visit and offering himself to go over to Evandale and convey her to his home. After two or three letters had passed between them, she gave a reluctant consent, and he immediately set out to fulfil his promise. She returned with him to Greensburg, purposing to remain for two

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months; but the two months were lengthened into four, and then, after some demurring and considerable consultation, she agreed to stay at Evandale only long enough to enable her to arrange her affairs there preparatory to leaving the place altogether. Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, pitying her desolate condition, offered her a home for life in their house. It required but few arguments to induce her to accept this kindness; for, having once more experienced for a time the delights of social intercourse, she felt that the loneliness of her old home would be made almost insupportable by the contrast.

Mrs. Grey had many natural peculiarities of temper which her former habits had not improved and which rendered her at times not a very agreeable companion. But Mrs. Thorne was abundantly endowed with the charity that suffereth long and is kind, which is not easily provoked, which beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; and in her intercourse with her sister-in-law she found constant practice for these graces. This self-denying patience

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did not go unrewarded. Mrs. Grey died before she had been quite two years among them, leaving a pleasing testimony that the beautiful example of Christian excellence by which she was surrounded, and the many earnest prayers offered up in faith on her behalf, had not been entirely without effect.

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CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW PHASE OF LIFE.

HENRY'S whole manner of living was entirely changed upon his arrival in the city. Every thing around him presented a striking contrast with his former associations. Confusion seemed to have taken the place of order, noise of quietness, art of nature. All the old home-feelings, with their agreeable and softening influences, were gone,—exchanged for the bustle and selfish formality of a residence in a large boarding-house. He found it extremely disagreeable and wearisome, after a toilsome day, to go up to his comfortless chamber on the third floor and find no cheering voice or pleasant face to welcome him and relieve the monotony. He had been one of a united family group, every member of which felt a peculiar interest in the weal or woe of the other. If he were sick or depressed, they soothed

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or encouraged him; and they rejoiced in his happiness, or mourned over his misfortune, with a sympathy which it was delightful to remember. Now he was only one of a number of persons on whom his joy or sorrow would make no impression, and his absence from them would be hardly noticed. These uneasy reflections annoyed him considerably for a time; but by degrees they left him. The religious privileges, too, in which he had once participated with a certain sort of enjoyment, were now in a measure lost to him entirely. He missed the gathering of the household for morning and evening devotions,—the pleasant hymns of praise and the fervent and effectual prayers of the righteous man. He might of himself have read the Bible, and sung, and prayed to the Lord; for His ear is open to all that call upon him—who call upon him in faith; but the faith was wanting, and he knew in his heart that he had no acceptable service to offer. He attended public worship on the Sabbath; but the large, handsome building, filled with strangers, differed unpleasantly from the little church which

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he had been wont to attend, where the face of every worshipper was friendly and familiar to him. Yet these difficulties too began to grow less irksome to him as time wore away; he was becoming accustomed to the idea of living without even the appearance of having God's blessing, and he went less frequently to the place of public worship. The service of the Lord and family ties were fast losing the interest which he had once felt in them, and he was growing more and more deeply engrossed with business,—enlisting all his energies in the great struggle for wealth which was going on everywhere around him. Upon his first entrance on city life the effect of Mr. Thorne's parting words still lingered on his conscience, and, while suffering from its chidings, he had once again resolved to attempt the hard task of serving two masters —God and mammon—at the same time. The effort had proved quite as fruitless as upon the former occasion; for the world was as exacting as ever, and God had not repealed his law requiring ALL the heart and soul and strength and mind. Once

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more he found himself obliged to choose between the two, and once more he chose the world.

Every thing connected with business matters was now esteemed as of the highest possible importance, and he grew quite enthusiastic over bonds and mortgages and investments. Their very names bore a charm to him such as he could find in nothing else, as if they were to extend into eternity and everlasting benefits were to be derived from them. His eye glistened and his cheek glowed exultingly at the thought of a successful bargain, or any new invention by which money might be made; yet this was not happiness. Sleepless nights, tossing from side to side upon his bed, calculating and planning for gold, soon began to show their effects in his haggard face and worn-out frame. It was very sad to see all this labour and strength expended to obtain that which never has and never will satisfy the desires of those who seek it, while the same amount of zeal and determination, exerted on his soul's behalf, might have made him heir with Christ to an inheritance incor-

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ruptible and undefiled, in heaven, besides securing a much larger amount of happiness even in this life. It is only the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich without adding sorrow.

He had not forgotten his friends at Greensburg and the peaceful life which they were leading there. The mariner upon a troubled and tempestuous sea looks back towards the calm haven where his vessel has often lain safely, secure from the storm, and his heart yearns towards it as the most desirable spot in the world. With a similar longing Henry would often turn from the noise and turmoil of the life he had chosen to look back upon the peaceful and quiet home which he had left. Yet here the similitude ended. The mariner carefully examines his chart and compass, and employs all his energies to reach the desired haven; but our uneasy voyager upon life's changeful ocean acts differently.

"It is impossible that I should abandon my plans now," he whispers to himself; "I am in the very centre of the whirlpool, and I cannot——"

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He pauses: the most natural continuation of the sentence would be,—

"I cannot move of my own accord now, but must wait, to be drawn down into the lowest depths of the fearful gulf upon which I have launched my frail vessel."

But he turns the point skilfully and conclusively, thus:—

"I cannot yet clearly guide my bark to the peaceful shore in the distance, but must wait for time to send some favouring breeze to drive it hither."

Time! As if he himself had the power of counting the times and seasons which are hidden from human vision in the hands of the Almighty. He had quite forgotten the story which had once impressed him so deeply, of one who, like himself, calculated upon a long life on earth and purposed to store away his worldly treasures for future use, upon whom the sentence fell, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," while he was yet in the very midst of his vain schemes.

There was nothing to render him any the less mortal, or to prevent his sharing the

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same inevitable destiny; yet he wilfully closed his eyes upon such a possibility, and talked and planned for the future as if the disposition of all the affairs of life rested with himself entirely. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE TEMPTATION.

It was the morning of the Sabbath,—a calm, beautiful Sabbath in the early spring-time. A deep silence rested upon the city, broken only by the subdued tread of the few who passed along the almost deserted sidewalks. The streets, lined on either side with tall warehouses, which during the past six days had presented a scene of bustle and confusion, where men elbowed each other and drays and wagons could scarce find sufficient time and space for the purpose of loading and being unloaded, were now as still as if a deep sleep had fallen upon the inhabitants. All outside business was suspended; the warehouses were closed, and the thousands of unquiet mortals who had swarmed around and within them were now at rest from their labours, paying the fitting tribute of obedience to Him who has

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commanded, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." In general this was true, yet not in every particular instance. Upon the most of those strong doors the bolts had been securely fastened, not to be drawn back until Monday morning; and the leger and the account-books in the counting-rooms were closed, not to be opened during the sacred hours of the first day of the week. There were those, however, who slipped stealthily out of their homes and passed along to some more private mode of entrances to such warehouses; who were not willing to devote even the seventh part of their time to preparation for that eternity towards which their footsteps were so steadily tending. "Will a man rob God?" Yet they robbed him in taking what *he* had set apart as holy unto himself, to use for their own selfish purposes.

Within one of those darkened warehouses, seated at a high desk in the counting-room, surrounded by huge books and manuscript papers, sat Henry Morris, pre-

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paring to examine a pile of unopened letters which he had just brought from the post-office. One was from Greensburg; he knew that in a moment, without even glancing at the postmark; and this he laid aside until he should have read those pertaining more particularly to business matters. It had required time and many a conflict with conscience to bring him to the position in which we now find him,—an open and direct violator of the law of God, so entirely contrary to all that he had been accustomed to in former years. On this morning he had passed little children on their way to Sunday-school, with a firm tread, hardly observing them, while one year before, such a sight would have caused him to falter in his course with deep feelings of self-condemnation. If divine grace does not soften the heart, it becomes harder and harder as time passes; and the boy whose cheek once flushed at the very thought of doing a wrong deed, in manhood unblushingly pursues the path of sin.

Henry opened and hastily read one letter after another, placing it upon an empty file,

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and occasionally making some entry in one of the large books. At length the last was finished, and then he turned to the one from Greensburg. It was from Mr. Thorne, and he had perused but a portion of its contents when his attention was arrested by a single paragraph, which he turned again to examine for the second time. It was this:—

"Squire Burton is very anxious to sell his property, and offers it at a very low rate; I think, far below its real value. He has never got over the loss of his children, and the house has not seemed like home to him since they were taken from it. On the contrary, he appears to feel a disgust to every thing pertaining to it. Poor fellow! I am afraid that his affliction has only been the means of driving him farther from heaven rather than drawing him nearer to it. He intends to travel with his wife, in the vain search for that peace and contentment of mind which may never be obtained except in the service of that Saviour with whom he persists in remaining at enmity. It is wonderful to see the tenacity with which he still clings to earth, while acknow-

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ledging that all that made it beautiful has been taken away! He wants but three thousand dollars in cash at the time of sale, and will allow two thousand to remain on mortgage, making the whole cost to be but five thousand dollars, which you will agree with me in regarding but a low estimate, when we consider that a part of it is believed to be coal-land. Perhaps if you repeat this to Mr. Wray he may be induced to make arrangements for purchasing it."

The moral reflections which Mr. Thorne had made, and which were so very appropriate to the circumstances of the case, received scarcely a passing notice and made no impression upon Henry's mind. Every thing else seemed to be absorbed in the one idea: the old homestead—the possession of which had appeared to his boyish fancy as the very height of felicity—was for sale, and upon terms almost within his reach! His zeal to obtain it had somewhat abated within the past year, but now it was renewed with all its former vigour. He began to look over his resources. More than two years had passed since he had entered into

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the employment of Mr. Wray, and in that time he had been enabled to add considerably to his little hoard, so that at this time it amounted to two thousand dollars. One thousand more would make him the owner of the much-coveted homestead, with a debt upon it which he might soon be able to clear, and this many years before he had presumed upon having his wishes realized. As he mused upon such a possibility, his imagination grew active and vivid, and he already fancied himself its possessor. Of course he would not give up business and retire to it for a long time to come; for he would continue on working until he should have made eighty—no! a hundred—thousand dollars. When he left Mr. Thorne, twenty thousand dollars had seemed to him as a sum sufficiently large to satisfy his own desires and those of almost any other reasonable being; but he had seen more of the luxuries of life, and understood and appreciated more perfectly the value which the world puts upon one who has the reputation of being a wealthy man. One hundred thousand dollars would give him the appearance

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of a very prince among the simple-minded inhabitants of Greensburg; and with the consequence which it would give him he might rise to some point of distinction. He had not quite determined whether it should be as a member of Congress from that district, or whether he should aim at some even higher post of honour. He would be something which would give him *a name;* he had determined upon that; and then he should have accomplished the part which he had resolved to perform in life in his early boyhood. He would be rich and great and good! Oh, yes! he would never do any thing which his fellow-men would disapprove or regard as dishonourable. And this, then, had become his idea of goodness! To do nothing which might disgrace him in the eyes of the world! "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

One thousand dollars more would not only place him in possession of his father's old home, but might be of large assistance in making him rich. The land would be

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very valuable indeed if the supposition that it contained coal should prove to be correct. Could not he get the money in some way? He began to muse upon the possibilities. He might borrow it from Mr. Wray, and give his salary as security. No; that would not do. Mr. Wray was absent from the city; and, if this were not so, he would not be willing to loan money that was just now of so much importance to him in his business. And, even if he could obtain it in this way from some other quarter, it would not answer; for some months must elapse before he should be able to make the property that he would purchase yield money, and in the mean time he would need a considerable portion of his salary for his own personal expenses.

As these reflections were rapidly passing through his mind, he had been mechanically turning over the leaves of one of the large books before him; and now, for the first time, he looked down upon the open page, at the long column of figures. One thousand dollars seemed but a trifling item compared with that vast array of numbers,

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—so small as scarcely to be missed from the aggregate. To Mr. Wray, too, it would make but a slight difference; for, if he should lose that sum, it would not oblige him to reduce his expenditures in the least, and he would hardly feel the loss. How very easily it might be deducted without any one but himself knowing it! All the business was left entirely under his control for the present, and Mr. Wray had too much confidence in him to think of questioning the correctness of his accounts. He need only alter some of those figures, which was the most simple thing in the world if he were only very careful that they should not *appear* like alterations. And in a moment he commenced erasing with his penknife and replacing the numbers taken out by others. "Not with the slightest intention of cheating his employer by appropriating to himself what belonged to another," he reasoned, without pausing in his work. He would not think of such a thing for an instant. No; for he would certainly and gradually replace the full amount in small sums, as he could spare

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them. In this way he should be able to gain the desire of his heart, and no one would really be injured by it. It seemed most surprising,—the ease with which the whole thing was managed; and he passed rapidly on from line to line, until the requisite sum was subtracted. Then he looked admiringly over the smooth, clean pages, pleased with his own skill; for no one would have dreamed that the figures which met the eye were not those originally placed there.

Now he had nothing to do but open that great iron safe and take out a corresponding amount in money, and then the affair was quite concluded and he was the undisputed owner of what had so long been his only in imagination. The safe was opened; but he found it a much harder matter than he had supposed to transfer the pile of notes and gold from it to his own pocket-book. He paused irresolutely, while something of the truth of what he was doing flashed upon his mind. The money was not his; he had not the smallest title to it: then why should he take it into his own

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possession? He tried to reason with conscience, as he had previously done, that he would certainly pay it all back as soon as possible; but the attempt was faint and inarticulate, and unsuccessful in driving away the fear that oppressed him. Somehow, taking the money seemed different from merely altering figures. It was stealing! Yes, that was the only name which he could now give to the transaction, let him look at it in whatever light he would. How did he know that he should ever *live* to restore the money? The old text which had impressed him so deeply years before, came back to his recollection with new force:—"This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be?" And he trembled with strange agitation to think that he was no less mortal than the one in whose ears that message had been sounded. Similarly sudden and unprepared deaths were quite as probable now as they had been in the time of the Saviour. Every now and then he was hearing of some one being called suddenly away while in the very midst of their plans to gain or keep worldly treasures.

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His memory went still further back into the past,—the careless life which he had led at Mr. Conner's, and the appearance of the gentlemanly traveller, whose kind admonitions had never been quite forgotten. He had been induced by them to seek some more respectable occupation and to strive to fit himself for a higher position in society. He had shuddered at the bare idea of ever becoming a wretched inebriate; yet now he was just as surely on the road to temporal and spiritual ruin as he could have been if he had continued with Mr. Conner and given himself up to the love of strong drink. His coat was better, and his whole outward aspect was more pleasing to the sight; yet, if his guilt were known, he would be no less an object of contempt and aversion. Even in his own estimation he was degraded lower than, an hour before, he would have believed it possible for him to sink. Then, how must he appear to the perfectly pure and holy God? He remembered the earnestness with which he had resolved never to do any thing which would cause Mrs. Grey to be ashamed

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of him; but what would she think of him now, if she could see him as he saw himself?

It was the Sabbath. A ray of bright sunlight fell upon him from the half-open window, and a pleasant summer breeze passed through, fanning his brow and stirring slightly the leaves of the book, still lying unclosed upon the desk as he had left it. On just such a Sabbath, long ago, he had stood with little Ellen Thorne before the railing of that very house,—the old homestead,—and had planned to make it his own, impossible as such a thing might have seemed then. The whole scene was before him as vividly as if it had transpired but yesterday,—the child's serious face and warning voice, as she told him of riches given as a curse and prophesied that schemes formed and reflected upon on the Lord's day would never come to good. Her words had had some effect; but he had allowed it to pass quickly away, before it could have time to produce much of an impression. How shocked he would have been then, and Ellen too, if the pre-

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sent Sabbath, with that counting-room, and his own doings in it, had been pictured to them!

One after another, various scenes of his residence with the Thornes came up to his remembrance, with their unwearying kindness and gentleness to himself. What would Mr. and Mrs. Thorne think of him now? The wintry night when, while making one of that pleasant household group, Charles had come to the door with the message from Squire Burton's, and he had accompanied Mr. Thorne to the house of death. Since then he had learned to look upon death almost with indifference; but now, as he recalled those little lifeless forms, he felt the old horror creeping over him. The appearance of Mrs. Burton as the dim light displayed her despairing countenance, and Mr. Burton's words of open complaint and determined rejection of all attempts at consolation, came up distinctly to memory. How much happiness did the possession of that beautiful house and grounds yield them then?

Their return to their own more favoured

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fireside, and the passage of Scripture which he had been called upon to read,—"of treasure in heaven,"—and his own resolution to lay up treasure for himself there: in all the years which had passed since then, what had he done towards this one great object? The Saviour's illustration of dependence upon God, shown by the flowers and the birds, which seemed so beautiful then, was quite as beautiful to his fancy now. Oh, how comparatively easy it would have been to him to have followed Ellen's example then, and to have determined, like her, to "seek first the kingdom of God," leaving all minor blessings and necessaries to be added in his own time and as he saw best! If he had only done this then, he might have been saved the mortification and agonizing self-reproach which he was suffering now. After resolving to walk in the narrow way, he had deliberately, of his own free will, turned into the wide road leading to death. He could see it all now plainly. The strait gate was still open to all who chose to enter; but there was a vast difference between that time and this. Then

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he stood upon the very threshold, and it seemed as if but one step forward was required to pass it; but since that night he had wandered very far away from it,—so far that it appeared almost impossible for his feet to retrace the dark and toilsome way.

One thing he could do. Thanks to the mercy of the Lord, it was not yet too late for him to undo the evil which he had purposed towards Mr. Wray. Once more his erasing knife was placed upon the pages of the book; nor did he pause in his work until the old figures occupied their former places. But the second attempt at erasing was not so successful as the first had been, and he regarded the blurred figures as a living evidence against him. His painful task was over; the money was carefully put back in the safe and the large book closed and laid away by the side of its companions; and then, falling upon his knees, his voice broke the silence of that room, uttering, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" He could say no more, for the weight of sin pressed more heavily upon his conscience than he had ever before felt it. It was a grievous bur-

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den, which he almost sank under. "Come unto me," saith the Saviour, "ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Henry repeated these words to himself as he locked the door of the counting-room, but they gave him no comfort.

"I have increased the load," he murmured, in answer, "until it bears me down to the very earth, and I have no power to throw it off."

He spoke as if the power must come from himself, and not from the Saviour;—and here was his great mistake.

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CHAPTER XV.

"'Tis easier far if we begin
To serve the Lord betimes."

HENRY MORRIS had entered the counting-room of his employer with a light step and a free, open countenance; but he turned from it in a very different manner. Now, as he passed along the streets, his head was bowed and his figure bent, as if the weight of years had been accumulated in that one short hour; while his averted face sought the ground rather than the eye of his fellow-men. He had gone but a short distance, intending to return to his boarding-house, when the sound of a neighbouring church-bell arrested his attention. It was the one belonging to the church to which the clergyman at Greensburg had especially recommended him, as having a pastor who was well worthy of the position which he

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occupied. He had gone only a few times; for the plain and solemn preaching had not been very pleasing to his natural feelings, and he concluded that, instead of attending at any particular place of worship, it would be more agreeable to go from one to another, as it might suit his fancy or convenience. He had not been at any church for two or three weeks previous; but now any thing seemed preferable to the solitude of his own room, and he resolved to accept the invitation so loudly and distinctly given.

He took a seat in a remote corner of the building, and awaited the commencement of the service. The sermon was a searching one, addressed to sinners, and every sentence seemed to burn into his soul like a coal of fire. He heard his own case accurately described, and felt as if he was a marked man and that all who saw him must recognise his great guilt. He scarcely knew how he had reached home after leaving the church; but he soon found himself in his own room, with a burning fever upon his brain and pain in every limb. He

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threw himself upon the bed, vainly hoping for relief and rest.

We need not record the various stages in the progress of a severe disease which now seized our young friend and took him to the gates of death. Suffice it to say that health, strength, reason, and all but life, yielded to its violence, and for days he was unconscious of all that passed around him.

When at length the disorder was checked and a season of quiet sleep suddenly restored his consciousness, he was bewildered by the scene around him, and faintly said,—

"Where am I, Mrs. Thorne? and why are *you* with me?"

"You are in your own room," she replied, gently, comprehending in a moment the real state of his mind, "in your own bed, and I am here to take care of you. But you must be calm and quiet now."

"But why am I in bed?"

"You have been ill; and, though I hope that you will soon get better, yet, to make it more certain, it is desirable that you

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should not disturb yourself by thinking or talking any more than is necessary."

The extreme weakness which he felt, now that the first excitement of surprise was over, fully corroborated what Mrs. Thorne had said, and he lay perfectly motionless for a time, until his restless thoughts suggested a new inquiry:—

"How long have I been ill? What made me ill?"

"The doctor thought that you had overtasked your strength by too close application to business."

"I do not understand that." And he shook his head doubtfully.

"It is quite common for fatigue of mind to wear out the body; and therefore, in your present weak state, it is important that you should not disturb yourself."

Every precaution was used that kindness and judicious care could devise; yet his recovery was so very slow that the physician recommended change of air as essential to his entire restoration. As soon as it was deemed safe, Mrs. Thorne prepared to accompany him to her own home. The

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journey was accomplished by easy stages, and Henry Morris found himself once more with his friends at Greensburg, a weak and humbled man, with a wound upon his spirit which time might alleviate but could never entirely heal. As he again felt the pleasing influences of religion around him, he once more wondered and bitterly regretted that years before—in his youth—he had not yielded to them and given himself to God, before his heart had become so hardened against the calls of his Saviour!

No one was conscious of the crime he had contemplated but himself and his Maker, unless, in the ravings of delirium, he might have betrayed it to Mrs. Thorne; and, if such was the case, she had never made the slightest allusion to it, or allowed her knowledge of it to influence her conduct towards him. But the very fact of its being unknown to his friends seemed to add to his sorrow by making him feel as if he were an intruder in the family, admitted among them only because they were ignorant of his real character; and he

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determined to impart the secret to Mr. Thorne. It required some delay and much nerve to enable him to follow out his determination; but it was at last accomplished.

"Thank God for having saved you at the latest moment and spared your life that you might have time for repentance!" said Mr. Thorne, fervently, when he had finished.

There was something in the earnest tones of his voice that arrested Henry's attention. "Yes," he repeated to himself; "it was only the power and grace of God that saved me from doing what I intended; and now, in his mercy, he is giving me space to repent of my many sins against *him*, instead of having cut me off in them."

Then, as the extreme danger to which he had been exposed occurred to him, he shuddered and turned pale. Had it not been for that undeserved mercy and grace, he might then have been one of the inhabitants of the world of woe, called to endure the sufferings of hopeless remorse throughout eternity! Feelings of intense gratitude almost overcame him as he thought of this, while Mr. Thorne tried to urge upon him his duty

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towards that God whose laws, more than those of man, he had broken. The young man's heart responded to this appeal, and he exclaimed, inwardly, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight!" Yet weeks of difficulty, distressing doubts and agonizing fears, passed before he experienced peace in believing and obtained a comfortable assurance of being accepted through the Redeemer. He at length saw his mistake,—saw that even in the very hour of apparently the deepest humility he was trusting to his own efforts to secure deliverance from sin rather than the power and grace of God.

Mr. Wray sent many kind inquiries after his health; and, as these grew more and more favourable, he at one time desired to know when he might expect to see him in the city, again occupying his former place in his employment. This question, under the peculiar circumstances, proved to be a difficult one to answer. In a worldly point of view, it would be very much to his advantage to allow all that had transpired the last time he was in the counting-house to

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remain a profound secret. Mr. Thorne would never expose him, and so he could go back and take his place as usual just as if nothing had happened to throw a doubt upon his integrity. But he had learned that there were higher claims than these to be consulted. He had fallen from the pinnacle of self-esteem, and, knowing something of his own weakness and inefficiency, felt that he was not yet strong enough to meet and grapple with the temptations to which he would be exposed. He had another and perhaps equally strong motive influencing him. He felt that it would not be doing right towards Mr. Wray to go back into his service in this manner, after having proved treacherous to the trust reposed in him. Accordingly, he wrote a long letter, humbly and frankly explaining all, and penitently asking for that pardon which he had previously begged of a higher authority. Mr. Wray was greatly surprised, and would sooner have believed the story to have originated in the delirium of fever still lingering after the disease seemed to have been checked, had it not been that his books bore

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sufficient proof to substantiate it. He was a reasonable man, and saw that the lesson so bitterly learned and the sin so sincerely repented of would never be forgotten, but would exert a lasting influence for good upon the heart of the young man. He felt a peculiar regard for Henry. He had watched him when a boy in Mr. Thorne's family, and admired the diligence, enterprising spirit and good character displayed in his conduct from that time up to manhood; and even this dark circumstance could not make him doubt the correctness of his principles. He had lived many years in the world, and, having seen much of its temptations, was quite familiar with their strength, and understood how to sympathize with one who had met and conquered, though it was at the very last moment. Instead of writing an answer to the letter, he concluded, as he had business in Greensburg, to see him and reply to it in person. They had a long interview, in which he still offered Henry his former situation and was surprised at his persisting in rejecting it for the present.

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"I left here, sir," Henry said, in explanation of his conduct, "determined to make money and become great in the eyes of men. I knew that I should meet with temptations, but, in my pride of heart, believed myself quite capable of resisting them by my own strength of will. You speak of my having a talent and taste for business. I am conscious of this and know its value; but I am not strong, and am afraid to trust myself so soon in the busy world, lest I should become too much absorbed by it and again fall into temptation. Since my return to this place, I think, my feelings have undergone a change, and I hope that my chief desire in the future will be to become rich towards God and have my name written in the book of life; but I would not expose my weak faith too soon to so severe a trial."

"I think I could trust you, Henry. I do not believe that you will ever again be led into the error from which you escaped so safely," replied Mr. Wray, earnestly.

"No, sir," said Henry; "I hardly think that I would be led into the *same* form of sin as that from which God delivered me;

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but there are other temptations, more subtle, though not less dangerous, and against which I would be less upon my guard."

"And from these you might be similarly saved," urged Mr. Wray.

"I know it; but 'what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

Mr. Wray was silent. He was not a religious man; but he had a regard for religion and a high respect for those who were consistent followers of its precepts, and such a text of Scripture had weight in his estimation.

"You are the best judge of your own duty, Henry," he said, after a pause; "and, although I shall miss you very much,—more than you think, perhaps,—still, I feel that it would not be right in me to press the matter any further."

Henry seemed about to speak, yet hesitated.

"What is it, Henry?" Mr. Wray inquired.

"I was thinking, sir," he replied, "that if after a while you should continue to think

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me worthy of your confidence, and should like to employ me, I would be glad to be with you again. I have no expectation of giving up business entirely. We are the stewards of God, and, as such, are bound to make proper use of the talents with which he has intrusted us, and I hope some time to be enabled to use mine rightly and in such a way as to put it in my power to do something for the advancement of his cause and for the benefit of my fellow-men."

He spoke humbly, yet feelingly, and Mr. Wray believed that his hope would be realized. He held out his hand.

"Let me hear from you and see you as often as possible," he replied; "and I think it will not be long before I shall have you once more at my right hand."

Henry gave a hasty but grateful assent, for his heart was too full for many words: and so they parted.

Mr. Wray's confidence was not misplaced. Henry entered his employment again, and for years as clerk, and after-

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wards as junior partner, he conducted himself in such a manner as to win the respect of all those with whom he was associated. None—not even his mere business acquaintances—ever mistook him for a man of the world; for his whole life gave unquestionable proof that he was living above the world, and that in the midst of worldly prosperity he was laying up treasure in heaven, where his heart and its affections were.

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CHAPTER XVI.

"Them that honour me, I will honour."

We will take one more glimpse at our friend Henry Morris. He has returned to Greensburg in the prime of life to take charge of a branch of the business there. He had always felt a preference for the country, and sometimes amid the bustle and excitement of his city life had allowed himself to look forward to a time when he might find himself again among the friends of his youth. But much oftener did his thoughts turn towards the more certain hope of reaching that better country to whose rest his feet were tending.

He has not found living above the world to interfere with his duty as an inhabitant of it; nor has his looking up to heaven as his final home made an earthly one any the less cheerful or comfortable. His business has not suffered from his faithful ad-

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herence to the principles of religion; but, on the contrary, that which in the excess of attention paid to it caused much uneasiness and proved to be a weariness to body and spirit, exercised in moderation has become a source of satisfaction. God never intended that man's whole soul and strength and mind should be devoted to any mere worldly purpose; and whenever this is done it must be followed by injurious consequences. We are to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and if, while endeavouring to act out this law of our being, and feeling our dependence upon God and trusting in him, we give worldly pursuits their proper position, they need not necessarily annoy or disturb us, but, by giving healthful employment to mind and body, may be useful and pleasant to us. Henry's business affairs have not been uniformly prosperous; and he has known times when it seemed as if, after all his industry and perseverance, he might be left to poverty. But in the very darkest of such hours he has been able to say calmly, and from the heart, "Although the fig-tree

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shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." God has said, "Blessed is the man that putteth his trust in the Lord. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed." He would not give one week of the solid happiness which he now possesses in religion for the whole amount of uncertain enjoyment that could be extracted from all the years passed by him in the service of the world. He can only regret, as he recalls those wasted years, that he had not followed the example of his friend George Thorne, by beginning to serve the Lord in his early youth. He has gained as much of earthly honour and distinction as he wishes; but this is of a different sort from that which once gilded his dreams of the future. What he now receives is such as every one of similar capacity, who tries to do his duty towards God and man, may obtain; the other was

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the fickle flame of worldly popularity, which, though it burn brightly for a while, may be extinguished at any time, leaving us alone to grope our way in darkness.

Mr. Thorne has long since gone to join the family of the redeemed in heaven; but his wife still lives to show forth the beauty of holiness by her gentleness, patience and faith, and lead others to embrace the doctrines of that gospel which has been a lamp to her feet and a light unto her path; thus proving the truth of the promise, "The righteous shall bring forth fruit in old age."

George has been pastor of the church at Greensburg for several years, where he is loved and respected by all. We will allow him to tell the story of his own past history, by quoting from a letter written in answer to one from Henry, referring to his bitter experience in endeavouring to gain earthly good:—

"My life has been an unusually happy one. In my infancy it was made so by the tender, Christian parents whom God gave me; and, as I grew older, principally by

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the special grace and favour of the same Great Being, my Father and the Guide of my youth, who called me to his care and protection before the 'evil days' came. I think that a larger amount of happiness may be found in the vocation which I have chosen, perhaps, than in any other. Many may differ from me, but this is my own experience. I do not pretend to say that the ministry has not its peculiar trials and difficulties; but I do think that a minister of the gospel, who strives to be faithful to his calling, has opportunities of being useful and of gaining the love and esteem of his fellow-men,—two of the purest earthly sources of happiness, such as no other one may have. In every trial and suffering, too, he has the particular sympathy of his great pattern, who went about teaching and preaching in the towns of Galilee."

THE END.

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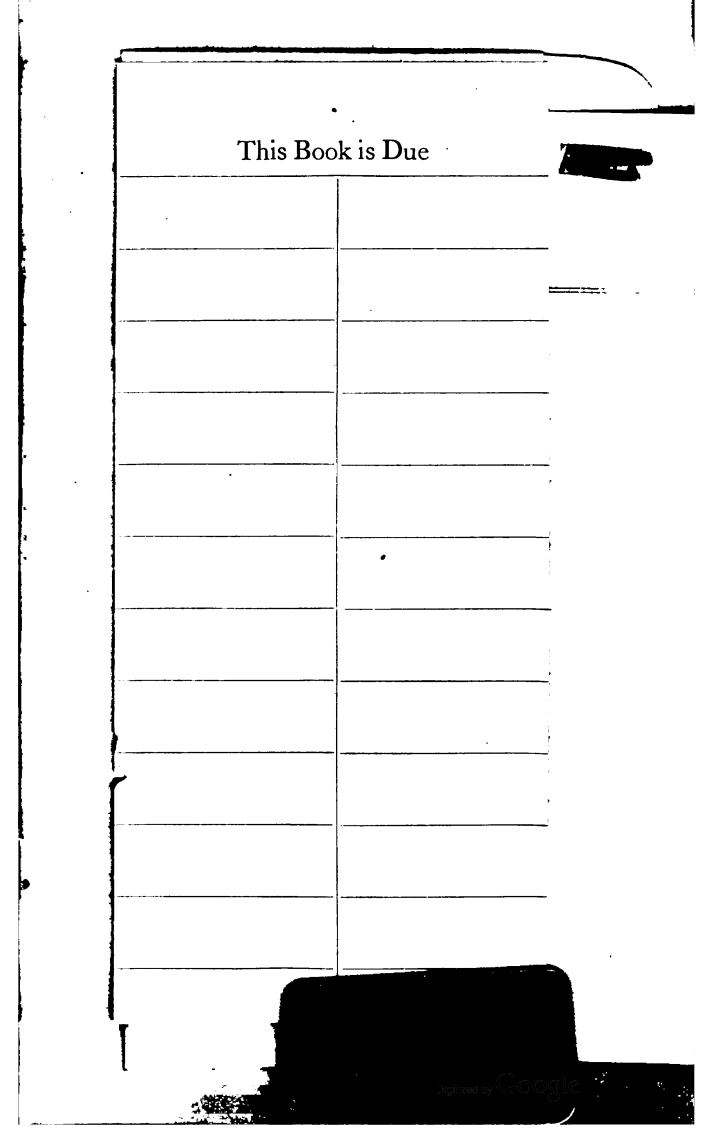


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